

DYAL SINGH PUBLIC LIBRARY
ROUSE AVENUE,
NEW DELHI-1

DYAL SINGH PUBLIC LIBRARY

1 - Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg.

New Delhi - 110 002

Cl. No.

915.4

D 995 F

Ac. No

18378

Book is due on the date stamped

[illegible]

FRAGMENTS
FROM
INDIAN LIFE

**FRAGMENTS
FROM
INDIAN LIFE**

C.C. DYSON

**LOW PRICE PUBLICATIONS
DELHI-110052**

First Published 1913

Reprint 1993

Original Title

FROM A PUNJAB POMEGRANATE GROVE

ISBN 81-85557-07-1

Published by:

LOW PRICE PUBLICATIONS

425, Nimri Colony,
Ashok Vihar, Phase IV
Delhi-110052.

Printed at:

Unique Color Carton

New Delhi-110064.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
JOURNEY TO INDIA—MOSES OR TOO-TOO ?—A SEA POST OFFICE —THE EURASIAN RACE—BOMBAY—A NARROW-MINDED ENGLISHMAN—A DINNER AT THE PRO-CONSUL'S . . .	1

CHAPTER II

IN THE SOUTH MAHRATTA COUNTRY—A DURBAR—A COLLEGE PRIZE-DAY—A MAHARAJAH'S BANQUET—A HINDU LADY'S "TRAZU" CEREMONY	14
--	----

CHAPTER III

JOURNEY TO HARIANA—BHOPAL—GWALIOR—AGRA . . .	41
--	----

CHAPTER IV

THE POMEGRANATE GROVE	58
---------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V

NOTABLE INDIAN WOMEN IN PAST AND PRESENT TIMES . . .	74
--	----

CHAPTER VI

A PILGRIMAGE AND A JOURNEY OFF THE RAILWAY LINE . . .	88
---	----

CHAPTER VII

A MODEL NATIVE STATE—A CHIEF'S INSTALLATION—POSITION AND POWERS OF INDIAN CHIEFS	107
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII

	PAGE
A COSMOPOLITAN DINNER-PARTY—AN AFGHAN PRINCESS—AN INDIAN BLONDEL	123

CHAPTER IX

AMONG THE MISSIONARIES—A LADY DOCTOR	144
--	-----

CHAPTER X

INDIAN SERVANTS—PETITIONERS AND PERTINACITY—A LADY LAWYER	168
---	-----

CHAPTER XI

DELHI FIFTY YEARS AGO	181
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII

THE ROYAL VISIT TO CALCUTTA—THE PAGEANT—CAN ENGLAND KEEP INDIA?	197
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII

THE ARMENIAN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY IN CALCUTTA	213
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV

CALCUTTA AND ITS PALACES—BISHOP AND NAUTCH-GIRLS—A SHELLAC FACTORY	228
--	-----

CHAPTER XV

THE EDUCATION OF AN INDIAN RANEE—LIFE IN AN INDIAN PALACE	248
---	-----

CHAPTER XVI

A CULTURED INDIAN LADY—AN ENLIGHTENED DEWAN—A BRAHMIN ARTIST—LAST DAYS IN INDIA—RETROSPECT	268
--	-----

FROM A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

CHAPTER I

JOURNEY TO INDIA—MOSES OR TOO-TOO?—A SEA POST
OFFICE—THE EURASIAN RACE—BOMBAY—A NARROW-
MINDED ENGLISHMAN—A DINNER AT THE PRO-
CONSUL'S

Now that I have arrived in Hariana, which is to be my headquarters for some time, I have leisure to write to you; but before I describe my present surroundings I must tell you a little of what I have seen and felt before arriving here. I want to bridge the distance that separates us, and get you to enter into my thoughts and feelings, so I am not going to write only descriptions and details of happenings, but the thoughts they arouse in me and the many interesting by-paths of history to which they show the way. I can only touch on these and give you a glimpse, as it were, of the various fields

2 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

of study thus opened out ; but, having shown the ways, you will be able to follow them up for yourself. When I sit down to write to you, I am going to think we are in the same room, and I am having a chat with you, so I shall put everything down as if I were talking to you. In your quiet invalid's life I know you will enter into all, and, in spirit, live my life with me.

You know how I longed to visit the East, which I always thought of as the home of romance and mystery, where the commonplace would be left behind ; but the first words I heard when the P. & O. boat anchored at the first Eastern port, Port Said, were not romantic. I was wakened at six o'clock in the morning by knocking at the cabin door.

“ Who is there ? ”

“ Cook's man come to take Mrs. Leaver to Jerusalem.”

Mrs. Leaver was the occupant of the other berth in a two-berthed cabin, a delicate, dainty old lady with silvered hair. She looked not less than seventy years of age, but under the auspices of the courteous and capable agent of the invaluable Messrs. T. Cook & Son she started off for the Holy Land, and would travel with as much ease and comfort as if she had been a princess,

and probably see a great deal more of interesting sights.

Port Said used to be full of cut-throats of all nationalities, but has greatly improved of late years. It is now safe for passengers to land, and ladies may walk about alone with impunity. All were glad to get off the boat for a few hours, and most of us spent a little money at the well-known Chinese shop, where the beautiful embroideries and eggshell china are a great temptation. On returning to the boat passengers showed their purchases, each requiring the other to guess what price had been paid. Some people coming East for the first time had been greatly imposed on by street-sellers, and had paid eight or ten shillings for bracelets of coloured stones, while others who knew the ropes had obtained the same for one shilling. The unwary ones felt greatly humbled on hearing how they had wasted their money.

In spite of a few blue-robed fellaheen in the streets, Port Said appeared to me more like an inferior French or Italian seaport than an Eastern town.

In the evening our boat started again and steamed slowly down the Canal to Suez. As we passed down the Canal we saw a few camels

4 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

occasionally, and Bedouin boys ran along the banks shrieking for coppers. Some passengers responded to the appeal, and threw them, deriving amusement from the frantic efforts of the boys to find the coins in the sand. Then came a short stay at Suez, the starting-point for the Desert, it is a picturesque place, where flocks of seagulls hover round the steamers, hoping for scraps of food, and the passengers found amusement in feeding them.

Suez is attractive to the passer-by, but the English doctor at the hospital, who is an acquaintance of mine, and came to take me round the place, said "I never heard of any one living at Suez who had the chance to live anywhere else."

On leaving Suez we entered the Red Sea—which ought rather to be called the "Blue Sea," so exquisitely azure are its waters. As we steamed along I looked with awe and interest at the high peaks of the barren mountains that border the sea—for one of them is Sinai. My mind was occupied with two Biblical stories which from childhood have had a place in my mental storehouse. You and I belong to a generation which in youth went regularly Sunday after Sunday to morning and evening

service in our parish church, and heard one lesson from the Old Testament and one from the New at morning service, and two more in the evening. This went on year after year till quite unconsciously we had received a thorough training in Bible history—the characters seemed as well known to us as if they were members of our family, indeed we might call them familiar friends, and we should no more have thought of doubting their existence than we should have doubted our own family chronicle.

I think the young people of the present day are not as a matter of course familiar with the Bible. Just now I heard a young lady answer some one who remarked on the memories evoked by the scenes we were passing through, by saying “Oh, I don’t know much about Moses and those old Johnnies.” And I think she missed something—as do her fellows.

Who can pass the Red Sea without thinking of Pharaoh and his hosts? The cadences of the grand old Song of Moses haunted me

“I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed
gloriously

The Lord is a man of war

Pharaoh’s chariots and his hosts hath He cast into the
sea, even into the Red Sea.

They went down to the depths like a stone.”

6 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

I thought of Christina Rossetti's remarks that the fate of Pharaoh and his hosts is an awful lesson against time-serving untruths.

"It was told the King of Egypt that the people *fled*."

Nay, but "the children of Israel went out with an high hand" (Exodus xiv. 5).

On the supposition (apparently) that *they fled*, Pharaoh summoned his army and pursued them.

Who told him that they fled?

To inform him of the unvarnished truth would have been a formidable undertaking. Possibly he on whom the duty devolved softened his version of the transaction for royal ears. The Israelites were clean gone; what mattered it whether their exodus was described as a triumph or a flight?

Yet in the long run it clearly did matter, when Pharaoh and his host ended their chase, disappearing under the waters of the Red Sea. Verbal inaccuracy is often responsible for apparently incongruously big results.

I was reading again the grand old song of triumph:

"With the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were piled up,
The floods stood upright as on a heap.
The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake.

REHEARSING FOR A CONCERT

'Thou didst blow with Thy wind,
And the sea covered them :
They sank like lead in the mighty waters,
Thou didst overthrow them in the sea, even in the
Red Sea," etc.

The music of Handel's setting of these words echoed in my mind ; I went back in thought to old Handel Festival days, and seemed to see and hear our favourite tenor rising to declaim, "The enemy said," etc.

I was humming the music softly to myself, but incongruous sounds filtered down from the upper deck where a concert rehearsal was going on.

An old young lady was singing of Miss Too-too's adventures in France, and giving the French dandy's greeting,

"'Ullo, Too-too, 'ow are you ?" etc.,
and the refrain,

"Too too, too too, *too*,"
rang shrilly through the air.

This was followed by a young man's voice singing :

"In Jungle Town
A big baboon
Came out to spoon
Beneath the moon," etc.

I laughed, and gave up trying to recall ancient history. "Times are changed,"

8 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

thought as I brought my mind back to the twentieth century and went to offer my assistance to some young ladies who were struggling to get their fancy costumes finished, for most of the passengers were occupied in preparing for a fancy-dress ball which they held that evening in spite of rough and cold weather. As they tramped round the deck in procession, in order that their costumes might be judged and prizes awarded, I admired the pluck that had enabled them, in the intervals between paroxysms of sea-sickness, to take so much trouble in preparing for the ball, actuated by the wish to "play up," *i.e.* to help to keep some amusements going, though I did not admire the taste which awarded the first prize to a young lady who was disfigured by having stuffed herself out to represent a plum pudding. The first prize for gentlemen was won by a well-known London actor, a tall faired-haired young man, who looked well as Cupid with his bow, though somewhat more stalwart than that sprite is generally supposed to have been.

On the following evening the concert took place, and the singers I had heard rehearsing were, with other performers, rapturously applauded

by a crowded audience, many of whom could only find a place by sitting on the sky-lights

As we approached Aden the weather became deliciously warm. Though anxious to escape the coaling which makes a stay at Aden, the naval Clapham Junction of the East, a necessity we did not succeed in getting ashore. Though "the Rock," as it is called, has a barren, uninviting appearance, it is rather a favourite station with English officers, they see a good many people, for distinguished passengers are generally landed and entertained, and excellent sport is to be had on the Somaliland side

At Aden thirty Post-Office clerks from Bombay came on board, and, during the five days' journey that ensued, were occupied day and night (relieving one another) in sorting the mail, so that by the time Bombay was reached the letters were all in the right sacks, ready to be despatched in the various trains that would be waiting to convey them north, south, east, and west, all over India. This Marine Post Office saves a great deal of time, as if the letters had to be sorted in Bombay there would be much delay in despatching them, and a day or two saved in the transit of letters is considered a great boon in India, especially by English

10 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

residents in up-country districts, where letters are the life-belts that save them from succumbing to the depressing influence of long periods of isolation from the society of people of their own race and standing.

The Post-Office clerks were mostly Eurasians, *i.e.* descendants of marriages between native women and Englishmen. They are very numerous in India, but a rather isolated community, determined to dissociate themselves from the native community, yet unable to obtain recognition as equals from the English.

They fill subordinate posts on the railways and in the Police and Post Office successfully, but do not attain the standing of "Sahibs"—gentlemen—though there are a few (very few) exceptions where brilliant abilities and distinguished public services have won well-deserved success and recognition.

At Aden we left cold weather behind us finally. Warm clothing was discarded, white became the general wear, and one revelled in the delicious sensation of being thoroughly warm, through and through, without being weighed down by heavy clothing.

As we approached Bombay, the prospective brides, the young ladies going out to be married,

grew nervous. There were six of them on board. Some were coming out after long engagements and wondered if they would recognise their fiancés on the quay or would find them much changed in appearance through residence in a hot climate, or whether the gentlemen would be disappointed in them, remembering perhaps a younger and fresher girl.

On this occasion all went well; the intended marriages were carried out in Bombay, except in the case of one particularly nice girl, whom no bridegroom came to meet. She had confided in me during the voyage and told me that she had her wedding-cake and wedding-dress on board, but just before the steamer started from London a telegram was handed to her on deck saying: "Do not come. Marriage must be postponed."

Her friends were seeing her off and she could not make up her mind to communicate the substance of the telegram to them, nor to stay behind at the last moment; so she remained on board and throughout the passage was very miserable and depressed. After reaching Bombay she went up-country to friends, from whose house the wedding was to have taken place. I have since heard that after some delay it *did* take place, for the friends were influential, and

12 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

the bridegroom was told it was too late to draw back. She has taken a risk, but whether the marriage will turn out better or worse than the general run, time alone can show.

Many amusing stories are told of the meetings, after some years have elapsed, of engaged couples. It has happened that an expectant bridegroom has been told by his fiancée on landing that his hopes are not to be fulfilled, that the lady has met on board some one she prefers, and intends to marry. I heard of a young man who had been living for a long time in a country district in India and not seen much of recent European fashions, who was so disgusted at the costume in which his fiancée landed at Bombay that he told her he could not possibly marry a girl who made such a guy of herself.

One such contretemps between disillusioned engaged couples has been most amusingly dealt with in Mrs. Croker's very clever novel, "The Catspaw," which I advise you to get, if you have not already read it.

A drive through the streets of Bombay, with its crowd of dark faces of many races wreathed in turbans of every shape and hue, and the picturesque dress of the numerous Parsees,

the tall stiff black hat of the men, and the gracefully draped sarees of exquisitely coloured silks worn by the women, made one feel that at last Europe was left behind

Next evening there was a dinner-party at Government House, where the King's representative lives in becoming state. On this occasion an Englishman of no importance distinguished himself by taking away his wife before dinner. As soon as the aide-de-camp had gone round and told the gentlemen whom they were to take in to dinner, the one in question found that his wife was to be taken in by a Parsee gentleman, a cultured man with Western manners, who had spent much time in Europe and assimilated all that was best there, and whose munificent gifts for the public welfare had been rewarded with a title. To the narrow-minded Englishman, this estimable gentleman was only a "nigger," not worthy to take his wife in to dinner, so he ordered his carriage and took her away to avoid this indignity, as it appeared to him. Needless to say, the couple never received another invitation to Government House.

Now I have assured you of my safe arrival, and written enough for one mail. You must wait till next week to hear more.

CHAPTER II

IN THE SOUTH MAHRATTA COUNTRY—A DURBAR—A
COLLEGE PRIZE-DAY—A MAHARAJAH'S BANQUET—
A HINDU LADY'S "TRAZU" CEREMONY

AFTER leaving Bombay I went to pass a few days with an old friend at Kolhapur, in the South Mahratta Country. The ascent of the Western Ghauts to Poona is a wonderful bit of engineering, and lovely views are to be had as the train winds slowly uphill, and one can look down at the green valleys with silver streams running through them; they are studded too with villages, which look so very far below us. By the time we reached Poona it was dark, and after changing carriages, the boy prepared my bed, and I settled down to sleep, for we were to travel all night and reach Kolhapur at seven next morning.

As soon as dawn broke, I awoke, and found we were passing through a flat agricultural country with wide roads bordered by trees, and, early as it was, the country people were on

the move, women were at the wells drawing water for the day's use, others with bundles on their heads were marching steadily along behind their men-folk to market or to some temple.

The Indian woman of the working class always walks behind her husband and carries whatever has to be carried.

At Kolhapur Station my friend met me with a little covered wagonette (called a *dhummie*) drawn by two bullocks with very long horns, who trotted along at a smart pace, while the driver pulled their tails instead of using a whip.

"Here at last is a little local colour," I thought.

Ten minutes' drive brought us to my friend's comfortable bungalow, where *chota hazri* (morning tea and toast), brought by a handsome white-robed Mohammedan "boy," was very welcome, as was also the hot bath which followed, though the large zinc washing-tub, which was the bath I was to use, was a novelty in the way of baths, but I afterwards found it in universal use throughout India.

I may here explain that "boy" is the term applied in Western India to all indoor servants, even if they are grey-headed.

Chota hazri, little breakfast, was followed by

16 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

a regular breakfast at half-past ten After an answering questions about mutual friends at home, I found that there was quite a programme of social events to be got through in the next few days That night a dinner at the Residency, next morning a College speech and prize function, third day a Durbar, fourth a banquet at the Palace

Kolhapur is off the main line of travel generally taken by globe-trotters when they visit India, and is not so well known as it deserves to be As a Sacred City, Hindus consider it second only to Benares They say that the gods put both cities in the scale, and that Benares weighed down Kolhapur by an almost imperceptible degree The temple of the Goddess Ambedévi in the heart of the city is highly venerated. The great bell which sounds the hours of prayer must once have been in a Roman Catholic church, for it has the Virgin's name engraved on it Only very great and important non-Hindu persons are allowed even to look inside the Temple into the Holy Place, though one is allowed to walk about the outer courts, which are occupied by small stall-holders selling the things needed for offerings to the gods Once a Governor of the Bombay Presidency

expressed a wish to see the inside, so a scaffold and platform were erected on which he had to mount to look over a rampart or wall into the inner court. What he saw is not on record. To reach this temple you have to go through the heart of the city into its tight-packed native quarters, through crowded streets so narrow that there is not room for one vehicle to pass another, and a puttiwala¹ has to run before the carriage shouting to the people to get out of the way.

There are beautiful silks and stuffs to be bought in the shops, and when we entered one to make a purchase, the whole street seemed to take an interest in the affair—some of the people entered the shop, others crowded round the entrance looking on and commenting.

There are few English residents in Kolhapur—only the Political Agent and his assistants, the Commandant of the native regiment, the Principal of the Maharajah's College, and home missionaries. There are also some American missionaries, who are always counted as Europeans.

Now I must tell you about our dinner-party

¹ A puttiwala is a liveried servant, wearing a brass badge (or *phut*) with his master's name on it.

18 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

at the Residency, the Political Agent's house—a lovely house in lovely grounds. The ante-room between the drawing-room and dining-room was filled with our host's hunting and shooting trophies. I do not know how many full-sized stuffed panthers and tigers with fangs showing grinned at us as we passed through. A visitor newly arrived who chanced to enter the place at dark and alone might easily get a shock. Our host and hostess were entertaining some high officials. At noon I had noticed the carriages of many Indian gentlemen rolling up to the Residency, for it is their duty to call on the Resident's guests. The dinner-table was beautifully decorated with pink lotus—the Indian water-lily. The repast was excellent, and while we partook of it the band of the Native Infantry Regiment discoursed sweet music on the verandah, into which all doors were open, playing airs from the latest operas and musical comedies then being performed in London. This band is quite celebrated, and has won several prizes at competitions in various parts of the country. Though the bandsmen are Mahrattas, the bandmaster, as usual, was a Goanese. The Goanese are a mixed race, descendants of native women married to the Portuguese settlers at

Goa, the only Indian possession now left to Portugal, which gave us Bombay as the dowry of Catharine of Braganza, wife of Charles II.

Throughout India you find the Goanese as bandmasters and—cooks! They have these two talents, music and the culinary art. The best cooks are always Goanese.

On leaving the dinner-table the ladies were joined in the drawing-room by some young Indian chiefs, *in statu pupillari*, whose States are near Kolhapur and who are being educated there, under the eye of the Political Agent, by an English tutor. They were handsome young fellows, set off to advantage by their fine brocaded coats, diamond or pearl necklaces, and rainbow-hued turbans, or picturesque hats.

By their headgear you can tell to which caste a native of India belongs. The hat worn by a Mahratta gentleman differs in shape from that worn by a Brahmin, and turbans are folded in a great variety of styles which are in use by different castes, the profession of turban-folder being recognised as respectable. These young chiefs were generally dignified and impassive in demeanour, but they forgot to keep this up when games began.

It is very usual in India to play games after

dinner. “Dum crambo” is a favourite ; blowing a feather across a tablecloth held up by people sitting in a circle on the floor, is another ; but what the young chiefs liked best were the guessing games. One of the company went out of the room, and the others thought of an object which he was to guess, and when the object thought of was a certain stone in the waist-buckle of a lady not present, the guessing it seemed rather a miraculous feat. Then there was a game of thinking of a celebrated man or woman, a letter of whose name was allotted to each player, who had to choose another personage with a name beginning with the letter allotted to him. The guesser had by a series of questions to elucidate the name of each personage selected. One man, whose letter was N, chose Noah, and as he described him as an Asiatic sailor it seemed improbable that that definition would enable the guesser to place him, but he succeeded in doing so.

At half-past ten the band played “God save the King !” while the young chiefs stood at the salute, and then we all took our departure.

Next day was speech-day at the Maharajah’s College, which is generally known as the Rajaram College, being named after the young

Rajah, who died while on a tour in Europe. A memorial erected to him may be seen at Florence, where his death took place.

The Camp at Kolhapur, where the English reside, is some way from the College, which is in the city. It is a picturesque drive from one to the other. The road is shaded by fine trees; on either side were bright green rice-fields or patches of tall waving Indian corn, and as we crossed the bridge over the river some big monkeys were jumping up and down the parapets. The road was crowded with carts, camels, and foot passengers—beggars were lying at the side, wailing, writhing, contorting their bodies, exhibiting their sores or defective limbs in order to excite the pity of passers-by. I admired the beautiful manners of a stately elephant laden with grass for the Palace. Horses generally take fright at elephants, so the orders are that the latter have to get out of the way when a carriage comes in sight. My friend and I were in a little one-horse victoria, pigmies compared to the elephant, but as soon as the mahout¹ perceived us he made the elephant understand, and the huge creature backed sedately up a very steep bank to get off the road and well out

¹ Elephant-driver.

22 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

of our way. He looked at us out of his small eyes, seeming to understand the situation so well : “Behold, why should they fear me? I should do them no harm. They are as dwarfs and I a giant. I could take them up in the carriage, together with the horse and driver, and throw them aside out of my way as easily as a child throws a ball.”

As we approached the city we found it was taking a holiday and treating the day as a gala-day. Shopkeepers and friends in best clothes were sitting at the shop-doors, and the streets were lined with crowds of people waiting to see their Maharajah and the Sahibs (English gentlepeople) pass along to the Rajaram College, where the boys of Kolhapur State get a good education at the Maharajah's expense.

The Maharajah drove up escorted by his Body Guard ; and the Political Agent, with his guests, had a little escort of Sowars (mounted men carrying spears with pennons attached).

When we entered the College hall, the Sahibs took their seats in the front rows, while the Maharajah, the Political Agent, and the guest of honour, the visiting Governor, who was to present the prizes and make a speech, sat on the platform.

The Principal of the College, who wore a very crumpled black gown, read out his annual report, after which some boys gave recitations in correct but rather laboured English. The visitor made his speech and then a long procession of boys went up to receive their prizes at his hands. While this went on, my thoughts wandered away to the place and the day when I had last seen that handsome and distinguished specimen of the genus Englishman who does his country's work abroad.

If it is true that "where our thoughts are, there are we," I was not in India among a crowd of dark faces framed in brilliant coloured turbans, the whole bathed in glorious sunshine. I was in London, in St. Paul's Cathedral, on a cold, grey spring day, and the occasion was the dedication of a side Chapel for the use of the Knights of St. Michael and St. George.

King Edward and the (then) Prince of Wales had come in state, and though the Chapel is small, the function was very impressive.

The Knights Grand Cross wore magnificent long flowing mantles of blue satin lined with red, and had gigantic stars on their breasts.

The King and his son both wore the same blue mantles as the Knights Grand Cross.

24 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

All the Knights met them at the door and followed in procession to the Chapel, which has beautiful old carved oak stalls. A short service was held there, then the procession went up the nave to the choir, where the rest of the service was held, a short sermon and some beautiful hymns. The bells of St. Paul's clashed an accompaniment to the hymns, and as they have a beautiful soft tone the effect was most moving. From my seat in the nave I had a good view of the proceedings. Everything had been so carefully rehearsed that there was not a hitch, no one hurried, no one was at a loss where to go or what to do, all moved quietly and impressively. This was due in great measure, I think, to the fact that nearly all the members of the Knightly procession were fairly old, and bore the impress in their faces of lives spent in good work, and duty done, self not the main-spring of their existence.

Only one of the procession was undignified, an old Grand Cross, a short man whose mantle was too long for him, so he clutched it up in front of him like an old dowager going upstairs at a ball and determined not to tread on her best dress at any price.

To come back to India, no one is a better

judge of a "gentleman" than the Indian people. A *real* Sahib is the same as a real gentleman, and you may hear a servant say : " No, I shall not take the place, he is only a low-class Sahib." And ladies are described as "first and second class ladies." When first the Indian Civil Service was opened to competitive examination there were many murmurs in India. "Are we to be governed by any low-caste Sahib who can pass an exam.? In old days the Sahibs *were* Sahibs." On this occasion they felt very sure that the distinguished Englishman now speaking to them was a first-class Sahib and listened with great attention to the good advice he gave them.

The Rajaram College is a picturesque building in the Indo-Saracenic style. After the ceremony was over, the Principal took us up to the flat roof, from whence we had a lovely view over Kholapur and the environs.

It is beautifully situated on rising ground which affords a lovely view over the surrounding country. A fine river winds through the outskirts of the city, which is embowered in trees, and the many temples and tombs rising from encircling groves add to its picturesqueness. Then the bathing-ghauts on the bank of the

26 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

river are always crowded with people bathing or washing clothes ; a little farther on, smoke is rising from the burning-ghauts, where corpses are cremated. One could look right away beyond the city to the Maharajah's New Palace, and not far from it is the pretty little English church, built by the celebrated Bishop Douglas at a time when there was always an English regiment quartered in the Camp.

The banquet is to be held at the New Palace, the Durbar to-morrow at the Old Palace in the city.

I was lucky to see a real Eastern ceremony, a Durbar, so soon after my arrival in India. When we arrived at the Palace gate, we saw that a guard of Native Infantry was stationed in the Palace Square. There, too, the gorgeously caparisoned State elephants were standing, and a fine white charger, to whose saddle was affixed the gilded, bejewelled Sacred Umbrella which the Maharajah alone has a right to, and from which he takes his title, "Maharajah Chatrapatti" or "Maharajah of the Umbrella," *chatra* being the Mahrathi word for "umbrella."

When we entered the Durbar Hall the seats were already filled with Indian gentlemen, each

in his allotted place, the position of which marks his social standing, and is of vast importance in his eyes.

We were received at the entrance by some State officials and guided to seats at the top of the hall near the daïs, on the side allotted to English visitors. Soon after we took our seat the blare of trumpets announced the arrival of the Maharajah, the Political Agent, and the distinguished visitor.

Heralds preceded them up the hall, calling out the Maharajah's titles. As representative of the King-Emperor the Political Agent at State functions always sat on a sofa beside the Maharajah on the daïs, and it was an important point of etiquette that they should both take their seats simultaneously. Had the Maharajah sat down first it would have been an act of discourtesy to the representative of the Paramount Power. They were both old hands at such functions, so they stood for a moment in front of the State sofa, looked at each other, and then took their seats with successful precision.

The Durbar was held in order that two young chiefs of States feudatory to the Maharajah of Kolhapur, who had just come of age, should be invested with powers to rule their States and

should do homage to the Maharajah as overlord. The proceedings began by the Dewan (Prime Minister) of Kolhapur reading out a statement of the size of the respective States and their revenues. Then each young chief in turn read out a declaration of his loyalty to his overlord, the Maharajah, and to the British Government, and paid a tribute to the advantages received from education by an English tutor. Then they knelt down and did homage to the Maharajah by touching his feet with their foreheads, and also placed some gold coins at his feet. When they rose up, one of the State officials handed each a very handsome dress—called *poshak*—presented by the Maharajah. Then they returned to their seats, and the Political Agent made a speech congratulating them and telling them what was expected of them in the future.

When the speech was ended, the ceremony of “garlanding” began. The Dewan brought two long necklaces, as long as a muff-chain, composed of tuberoses punctuated at certain distances by little bunches of pink roses, all held together by silver wire. The Maharajah put one round the Political Agent’s neck, and then round that of the distinguished visitor, after which the Dewan and his satellites proceeded

to do the same to each English person present. They brought long-necked silver bottles containing scent, and one had to hold out one's handkerchief, which was then sprayed with the scent and a dab of very strong scented powder was put with a little silver trowel on the back of the hand, then the garland was hung round the neck ; in the case of ladies wearing very large hats it was a difficult matter, and the Indian gentlemen whose task it was smiled discreetly. To each lady, besides the garland a pair of bracelets made of flowers was given.

This ceremony took some time, and while it was going on, a nautch-girl with her musicians took their places at the lower end of the Durbar Hall and gave a performance. It was not dancing, but shuffling the feet a few yards to one side and then to another—her dress and postures were modesty itself compared with the performance one sees on the European stage ; but the song that she droned out in nasal, shrill tones, was, I believe, an impassioned love song, which those who knew the language might think improper ; but nobody seemed to pay the least attention to it or to the performer. She was not a young woman, and I thought the saddest part of the affair was that she was

accompanied by an understudy, a little girl about eight or ten years old, who, after the older woman had sung a verse and stopped, took up the same strain and made the same movements of arms held out in impassioned appeal, etc., and one felt sorry to think that she was being initiated so young into the profession of nautch-girl and all it implies.

After the garlanding was completed, the Maharajah and the Political Agent and the distinguished visitor departed in pomp and state. Then we lesser folk filed out, and as we stood waiting for our carriages at the entrance we were the object of plain-spoken but not unfriendly comment from the crowd. My friend, who knows the language, said the remarks were amusing and to the point.

We went home to rest a while, then came tea, and my friend had time to tell me of the worry her head-butler was causing. She had offended him the previous day by "cutting" some of his charges—*i.e.* refusing to pay some of the overcharges in his weekly account—so he had come this morning and shown her a telegram saying that his father was dying and he must go home at once.

This is a favourite device of Indian servants

when they want to leave suddenly. They get some one to send them a telegram saying that their relatives are dead or dying. Though the employers feel very sceptical as to the truth of such statements, they cannot in the case of a father's death refuse leave, because to perform the burial ceremonies for a dead father is the first duty of the Hindu. Many a Hindu, who has no desire to marry again but has no son, takes a second wife solely for the purpose of begetting a son to perform his burial ceremonies.

My friend said that a respectable elderly man of her acquaintance recently brought a nice bright young wife to introduce to her. He had been married quite a short time, so my friend congratulated him. But he said ruefully : "She will be a great deal of trouble ! But what could I do ? I must have a son to perform my funeral ceremonies !" It is thought that the performance of certain ceremonies by a son after death ensures the salvation of the dead.

To return to the butler in question. My friend asked him to wait at all events till he heard his father was actually dead. But the man refused ; he intended to leave at all costs at once to put his mistress to as much inconvenience as possible, knowing that she had visitors and

was giving some parties and wished everything to go on smoothly.

Indian natives make excellent servants and are often really devoted, so long as you do not interfere with their peculations. When you do, you are "a low-caste Sahib," and they do not care to stay with you. If their wages are raised it makes no difference, they will cheat over the bills just the same; they seem to think it a duty to lose no chance of doing so.

My friend and hostess had been struggling to acquire the Marathi language spoken in Western and Central India by hundreds of thousands of people, but her servants did not encourage her efforts. Marathi is one of the best and purest Indian languages, but contains many pitfalls for students, many of the words being so alike in sound that the beginner is often betrayed into cruel mistakes.

Of the two Marathi words *beyduk* and *buduk*, one means "frog," the other "duck."

I was present one morning when the cook came to take his orders for the day, and his face was inimitable as he asked if his mistress really wanted frogs for dinner. Nor shall I forget the astonished face of a servant's child (we were visiting the mother, who was sick) when my

friend told him that she would put him "in a bottle"—for two Marathi words, *kopee* and *kopree*, mean respectively "bottle" and "corner," and she had used the wrong one.

Here they still tell the story of the zealous Bishop who in the midst of varied duties had struggled to acquire a knowledge of the people's language. In Marathi *mendré* is "sheep" and *manzer* means "cat." Intending in his address to a congregation of native Christians to quote "All we like sheep have gone astray," he used the wrong word and said "All we like cats have gone astray."

The Indian people are so phlegmatic that no titters were heard among the congregation. They gazed unmoved at the preacher, and most of them knew what he meant. The next Bishop did not attempt Marathi. He always preached in English, but an interpreter, an Indian priest, stood beside him and repeated each sentence in Marathi, after the Bishop had delivered it in English. I think this was the better plan. I was present on one such occasion, and a very stately, impressive figure the Bishop made, in his red robes, holding the pastoral staff in his hand as he stood on the chancel-steps with the white-robed priest, his interpreter, beside him.

This priest had great command of language and turned the English sentences into Marathi without faltering for a moment.

Now I must tell you about the banquet which we attended next evening. It took place in the New Palace, which is about a mile-and-a-half from the city and near the Camp, as the part where English officials live is called. The Palace is a handsome building, erected for the Maharajah's predecessor by a French architect. On this occasion the façade was brilliantly illuminated. When we arrived at the flight of steps which lead to the entrance-hall we were greeted by the courteous Dewan, who shook us warmly by the hand, and then another official conducted us to the room where the Political Agent and his wife received the guests, acting for the Maharajah, who would not appear at the banquet till dessert was placed on the table, for it would have been breaking his caste to partake of a repast including meat dishes, or even to sit at table while others were eating.

I heard that the Maharajah's predecessor had not been quite so particular; he would sit at table with his guests and partake of the viands other than meat.

On one occasion he was heard, during a lull in

general conversation, to say to the English gentleman who was sitting next him: "Now you must tell me which things are 'beastly'"—meaning, that as he was not much used to the appearance of dishes dressed in European style, he desired to be warned which contained the flesh of animals, so that he might not partake of it inadvertently.

The European residents in Kolhapur are not many, and every one of them had received invitations to the banquet, as had also the American missionaries, who were classed as "Europeans," that definition being understood to include all who were not natives of India. We soon filed in to dinner, which was laid in a fine hall, the windows of which are filled with painted glass, and the niches around the walls with statues depicting the exploits of Shivajee, the celebrated ancestor of the Maharajah of Kolhapur.

I was taken in to dinner by a Parsee, one of the masters at the College. The Parsees are thoroughly Western in manner of life and outlook. I found this one very agreeable. He had been a student at Oxford, and had spent his vacation in getting some experience of the efforts at social reform being made in some of

the worst London slums by College Settlements. He is the only Oriental I have ever met who has interested himself in such matters. He confided to me that he was a disappointed man, describing himself as a "Failed Indian Civil." He had tried to pass into the Indian Civil Service, but, failing, had been obliged to take up teaching as a profession—and in this he was very successful. The examination for the Indian Civil Service is so very difficult that even to have tried to pass it and failed seems to be considered as conferring some sort of distinction on a man.

In Indian newspapers one often sees advertisements couched in the following terms :

"Wanted a B.A. or 'Failed Indian Civil.'"

So apparently a "Failed Indian Civil" has his own particular status.

To return to the banquet. The menu was a very good one, and the repast well served, much as one might find at a good London hotel. When dessert was placed on the table, the Maharajah was announced, and the Political Agent went to the door of the hall to receive him and conduct him to the seat next his own.

After a few minutes the Maharajah rose, and, in excellent English, said how pleased he was to welcome the distinguished official, and indeed

all the guests, and proposed the King's health, which toast was warmly responded to.

Then the distinguished visitor proposed the Maharajah's health. This toast was duly honoured, and then the company all joined in singing "For he's a jolly good fellow," started by the English Durbar surgeon.

After this we left the table, the Maharajah escorting the visiting official's wife, and others following in due order of precedence ; we adjourned to a room where a number of native musicians were squatting, prepared to give a concert. Although it is claimed that Indian music is very abstruse, and that Indian musicians have discovered an extra tone to the scale, yet to outsiders their performance is so monotonous and unmelodious that it is not enjoyed by Europeans. We soon grew restless and asked permission to pass on to another room where some conjurers were waiting to give proofs of their skill. Their performance was really exciting and amusing, so we were quite sorry when the Political Agent's wife thought it time to take her departure, for we were in duty bound to follow her example. This is the etiquette of Anglo-Indian society ; no one dare leave before the most important lady present has gone, and it is

not thought good taste to linger long after her departure.

The Maharajah stood at the entrance and shook hands with all his departing guests, and we drove away feeling that we had been well entertained, and wishing that our drive home would last longer than it did, for the air was soft, the moon and stars brilliant, and the cicada were holding a concert in the trees, through the branches of which the fire-flies danced and gleamed.

Next day my hostess, knowing how desirous I was to see something of the manners and customs of the Indian people, took me out to a Native State about two hours' journey by rail from Kolhapur, to be present at the "Trazu" ceremony for which the Dowager Chieftainess—great-grandmother of the present-day Chief—had sent invitations. She was a well-known old lady, one of the old school, and in her day had had much influence over the countryside and among neighbouring chiefs, most of whom were related to her. *Trazu* is the Marathi word for "scale."

A pair of large scales had been prepared, on one of which the lady was to sit, and the other was to be heaped up with gold pieces equalling her

weight, and the money was afterwards to be distributed in charity.

To give away their weight in *silver* is an act of devotion not infrequently performed by Indian ladies of rank and wealth; but to give away their weight in *gold* is not within the means of many, and is thought a notable event. The old lady in question was of an ancient Brahmin family and had decided to celebrate her eightieth birthday in this fashion. She had been a widow many years, and, in accordance with the Hindu law for widows, only took one meal a day. She was short, small, and very thin, and must have been a light weight. A large concourse of spectators had assembled in the *wada*, and we had all taken the places allotted to us, when she came in, clothed in a plain white saree, such as all widows wear, and took her seat on the scale. Some priests droned out *mantras* while she sat there, and gold coins were heaped up on the other side. Native musicians beat drums and sang her praises until the scale tipped down, and then the old lady stepped out and went to a seat in the verandah, where we all went to speak to her in turn.

Two girls waving peacock-feather fans stood behind her chair.

She told us that some of the money would be spent in giving a dinner to the poor of the State, but a good deal was to be sent to institutions carried on for the benefit of poor Hindus.

After having paid our compliments to her, we were scented and garlanded and then took our departure.

I leave and go north to-morrow, having greatly enjoyed my stay here, seeing and hearing much that was new to me, and my pleasure has been enhanced by the delicious warmth, and the comfort of being able to wear light clothing. No more red noses, chattering teeth, stone-cold feet such as were my daily portion in London, no more necessity for wearing two pairs of stockings and two vests one over the other. Also it is very nice to find that functions and expeditions can be arranged without any anxiety as to whether they will be stopped or spoiled by weather, because for eight months in the year one can be sure of having no rain.

These are advantages not to be despised.

I must now close this week's budget.

CHAPTER III

JOURNEY TO HARIANA—BHOPAL—GWALIOR—AGRA

HERE I am at last in Haryana. I had to pass three days and two nights in the train to get here, but my servant made up a comfortable bed for me each night, by spreading a *rezai* (soft wadded quilt) along the seat, adding three pillows for my head and a blanket for the early morning, for after midnight it grows cold. I had booked my seat in advance in a through train, so I knew I should not be disturbed. I was travelling first class, which few people do in India, and I and one other lady had the carriage to ourselves all the way to Agra, and were very comfortable on our respective sides of the carriage. The journeys are so well arranged for in India. A train always stops somewhere between 7 and 8 a.m. at a station where tea is ready, and white-robed servants hand up to the window a tempting *chota hazri*—a pot of really good tea, with milk and sugar,

42 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

and some toast and butter, and generally fruit as well. This is very refreshing. In India it is impossible to get on without early tea, it seems necessary to set the machine going for the day.

Once, up North, when the train was crowded and the station servants over-driven, I was in danger of not getting served, and appealed to the guard.

“The train shall not go on till you have had your tea, madam ; I will see to it,” he assured me !

During the morning a guard will look in to inquire if you want lunch or dinner at certain stations ; if you do, you will find yourself eating a good meal of several courses in company of fellow travellers of many sorts, either at a railway station or in restaurant-car attached to trains on many lines.

On the first evening after leaving Bombay I noticed that all the trees seemed to have red leaves, but was told that it was merely because they were covered with locusts, who were devouring every scrap of vegetation in the region we were passing through. As it grew dusk many locusts came through the windows into our carriage. These mischievous creatures are

very handsome, like very large Indian-red dragon-flies.

After the first night, the train continued to roll on through rural India, and on these long journeys one gets to understand what a rustic, pastoral race the bulk of the Indian people are. There was not one town of any size between Bombay and Agra, a night and a whole day's journey in an express train. As one fares onward through long stretches of sparsely populated country, one gets glimpses of the life of the people—the ploughman, using a plough of a pattern that is hundreds of years old ; the goatherd ; the water-drawer, urging his oxen to and from the well ; the bird-scarer, perched amid a field of grain on a little straw seat elevated on four poles, we fear often giving way to the desire to sleep, but rising up fitfully to shout and wave his arms to scare the bird-thieves away ; and we see a little girl, whose head does not reach much beyond their tails, driving some huge buffaloes with formidable long horns, to drink at a pond or stream, and notice that they yield docile obedience to the stick with which their little mistress drives them ; and we see the women seated at the door of the huts and hear them singing as they grind the corn or sift the rice,

44 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

One realises how remote their lives and thoughts are from the modern world, and can understand how, through the black days of the Mutiny, the mass of the people were quite unaffected by it, and continued to sow and reap and tend their flocks and herds without any other thoughts than as to how the crops would turn out, and if they would get out of the moneylender's clutches or a bad harvest would oblige them to go deeper into his debt. It is said that some country people never even heard of the Mutiny or understood it. Or, if they heard of it, said: "What have we to do with soldiers' quarrels?—we have enough to do to 'fill our stomachs.' "

This rather inelegant expression is always in the mouths of poor Indian people. If convicted of an offence or a theft, the excuse always is that they were obliged to do it "to fill," etc. If, as is customary, a servant is told he will be fined for a breakage, or some neglect of duty, the reply is invariably: "Beat me, but do not take away the means to fill," etc.

Glimpses of village life bring many passages of Scripture to mind. Through an open barn-door one sees an ox tied to a pole, patiently pacing round and round in a circle, treading out

the corn—"Thou shalt not muzzle an ox that treadeth out the corn."

Then, when two women are grinding corn, they sit opposite each other over a small grindstone, each holding one end of the grinder, which they push backward and forward, and are in very close proximity to each other—"Two women shall be grinding at a mill, one shall be taken and the other left."

And so on. We realise that village people in India have not changed their mode of life and work since patriarchal times.

On the second day of my journey we passed through the State of Bhopal, whose rulers are such loyal adherents of the British flag. The Government of Bhopal is an anomaly, the ruling house being Mohammedans, while the bulk of their subjects are Hindus. The hereditary powers are on the female side, Bhopal being always ruled by a Begum (Queen) whose husband is only a Prince Consort,¹ and we do not hear that the wives are at all anxious to delegate their powers to their husbands or that the latter wish to seize them.

I remember hearing that at the first Durbar

¹ This is the case also in one of the great South Indian States—Travancore.

(held when Lord Lytton was Viceroy) the Begum of Bhopal of that day rather spoiled her otherwise magnificent appearance by wearing a knitted woollen comforter round her neck, almost hiding her splendid necklace. She had begun to wish to learn the ways of English ladies and had probably learned to knit, or, if the comforter was not her own work, some member of her family had made it for her, and it was an achievement of which she was proud. The present Begum is well known at the English Court.¹ She is really a ruler and makes her authority felt in every department in the State Government. She considers that her subjects are backward in education (this is the case with the whole Mohammedan community as compared to Hindus), and not long ago issued her fiat that they were to take steps to improve in this respect, and announced that if they did not quickly take advantage of the facilities of education afforded by the State, she would know the reason why—and give them cause to regret it.

After leaving Bhopal, the next interesting place we came to was Gwalior, the fortress-city

¹ She was one of the most stately figures at King George's Durbar, and her two little grandsons acted as Queen Mary's train-bearers.

on its high rocky plateau, standing up boldly against the sky—a conspicuous object from the plains that surround it.

Its Maharajah, Scindia, is a personal friend of King George, and has entertained him twice with great splendour, and has been able to give him splendid sport, such as the King really enjoys.

Scindia comes of a fine race. Though the Mahrattas held out longer than any other race against English rule in India, since their allegiance was given they have been loyal subjects or allies of the Crown. We owed a great deal to the Scindia of Mutiny times (the present Maharajah's ancestor); he it was who, riding into Agra at the head of his troops at a time when the English garrison was hard-pressed by the mutineers, arrived just in time to turn the scale in our favour, and save Akbar's Fort from falling into the hands of the mutineers.

I reached Agra as it was growing dusk, and was to leave the main line there, and rest for a day before going by a branch line to our quarters in Haryana. I had time to see that Agra, with its fine river, grand old fort, and splendid palaces and mosques embowered in green groves, is the most interesting and

48 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

thoroughly Oriental city that I have yet visited in India. I had not time to see half or a quarter of its interesting sights, but I visited the old Red Fort, where, since Akbar's days, Englishmen have done doughty deeds, and I thought of the handful shut up there in the black days, looking out, like Sister Anne, across the plains, hoping to descry a cloud of dust heralding the approach and the first waving pennons of the Lancers of Scindia's Relief Force. If he came too late the little band of Englishmen shut up in the Fort must take desperate measures, blow up the Fort and perish in its ruins, rather than that they and their wives should fall into the hands of the mutineers. But Scindia came in time to avert such a catastrophe.

Of course I visited the Taj Mahal. I will not attempt to describe it, but will only say that of the World's Wonders which I have seen the Taj is the only one that has not disappointed me. Its beauty far exceeds anything I could have imagined.

I was astonished at the effect the first sight of it had on my "boy," the servant who carried my cloak and umbrella. He was an ignorant country fellow from the Bombay hill-country

(my head servant had gone on to get things ready at Haryana), and such people are generally most apathetic and impassive, but to my amazement, as we passed through the outer gateway and caught the first glimpse of the white marble Taj at the end of the avenue of cypress-trees, with the stream flowing between, he dropped my chattels and threw up his arms, exclaiming "Ari, Ari, sundr, eraloqui!" ("Oh, what beauty; it is heaven!").

He was quite overwhelmed.

As I was thinking about this in the evening at my hotel, I remembered that Canon Barnett used to say: "True beauty, anything perfectly beautiful, appeals even to the most uncultured minds." He persuaded wealthy collectors to lend their best pictures for exhibition in White-chapel, and was apparently justified in his idea by the results of the plebiscite always taken at the exhibition. Those who came to see the pictures were the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, the most thickly populated part of East London. Each was required to vote for the picture he or she liked best, and the pictures considered "the best" by connoisseurs always got the most votes. The real beauty had struck home even to the uncultured perception.

I left Agra next morning and started off by a branch line to my destination, finding the travelling very different from that of the first part of the journey on main lines in express trains. Now I was in a narrow stuffy carriage with dust permeating every corner, jolting slowly along through a very dreary, sandy, barren country, but I buoyed myself up with the thought: "I shall be right out in the country among the Indian people and see them as they are—there will be no English but ourselves, and I shall get to know what the life of the people of India really is."

I reached Haryana at dusk; Bob was at the station to meet me, with an army of puttiwalas who took charge of my seven boxes. The sun had gone down, so the cover or head had been removed from the tonga (double dogcart) in which we were to drive to our quarters.

On the way I was to make acquaintance with the *dust*, which is a very insistent factor of life in India. It was like thick, dirty-white flour, the roads were overlaid with it, three or four inches deep, and the trees beside the road were white, not green. When people come driving or even walking, their approach is heralded by the cloud of dust they raise as

they move along; if a drove of cattle is coming it is a vast cloud.

We had not far to go to the Rest House or 'Travellers' Bungalow which was to be my home for some time to come. Throughout India, wherever the official's duty takes him—be he engineer, revenue-collector, forest-officer, or officer of the police force—there is always a Government Bungalow in which he can take rooms, and a kamsamah (cook-butler) to attend upon him. When Government officials are not using it, other English people may find accommodation there at a fixed charge. The Bungalow housed Bob and myself, but tents had to be pitched in the grounds for Bob's office and clerks.

The Bungalow rooms were lofty and spacious, the furniture was plain, but all that was necessary was there. In my bedroom I found a dressing-table and glass, an almirah (wardrobe for hanging dresses), a chest of drawers, and a wooden bedstead (on which our own mattresses would be placed) with mosquito poles and net, and on the floor some blue and white striped dhurries (country carpets) were placed. Throughout India one carries one's own bedding with one. I remember an Indian gentleman told me

52 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

that what surprised him greatly in Europe was that the hotels supplied bed, sheets, and towels !

In the dining-room there were a large table and some cane-seated chairs, as well as two deck chairs and some cane lounges. The dhurries were red and blue. I was quite pleased with the appearance of the dining-room when the butler had announced dinner.

There were our own lamps with rose-coloured shades, and our own glass, silver, and chinaware, flowers were tastefully arranged in vases on the table, and the dinner was a good one. Indian cooks are very resourceful even in the jungle ; with a frying-pan as the only cooking utensil, and two stones for a fireplace, they will produce an appetising dinner.

I give the menu :

Clear Soup.
Salmon Cutlets (tinned).
Roast Mutton.
Stuffed Tomatoes.
Caramel Pudding.
Cheese Toast.

So you see I need not starve out here !

After dinner we sat out on the verandah, which has a pretty flower-garden in front of it, shaded by splendid cork-trees, and on the

side of the house were other lofty trees and a golden laburnum, now a mass of splendid colour. The flower-garden melted off into the Pomegranate Grove of which I will tell you to-morrow. I had noticed some stately peacocks strutting about the garden before dinner, and heard from time to time a rush and whir of wings, which meant that they were flying up to settle on the trees for the night, in fact going to roost. But apparently the instinct which warns them of approaching atmospheric disturbance prevented them from sleeping, for as we sat in the verandah, shrill and startling wailing cries broke the stillness from time to time.

"There will be rain," said Bob. "When the peacocks make that noise it is a sure sign that rain is coming."

I enjoyed sitting in the verandah chatting, and just remarked, "This is really India," when, horror of horrors, the loud sound of a gramophone rent the air. I distinguished one of the latest London music-hall songs, one of Harry Lauder's successes. This was followed by airs from the last "Gaiety" operetta, and so it went on.

Bob told me that the Zemindar, whose house

54 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

and grounds were close by, had lately returned from a visit to London, and that this gramophone was one of his most cherished acquisitions and that we were likely to hear a good deal of it. On this occasion it played for nearly an hour, and spoiled my first evening in Haryana.

I retired from the verandah to do a little unpacking, and when the gramophone stopped, I was glad to go to bed ; and very comfortable and snug I felt with the mosquito-nets tucked in around me, for when the bed is large and the mosquito-poles high, and the nets tucked in tightly around the mattress, they make a little room within a room.

But though I was so snug and comfortable, I, like the peacocks, could not sleep. I was, however, well content to lie still and listen to the various sounds that succeed each other through the night in India.

Night is such a busy time for the winged creatures and the denizens of the jungle. The cicada chant incessantly, the night-owls hoot as they chase their evening meal, the cry of a band of flying foxes is weird, the chorus of bull-frogs, if you are near water in the rainy season, is often quite overwhelming, then in the distance one may hear the call of the jackal, warning the

panther, for whom he is stalking, that he scents prey, while on the road, near by, bullock-wagons pass from time to time, and the bells hung around the necks of the team jingle and tinkle pleasantly. In India, travelling and transport work are always done at night when possible, in order to avoid the heat.

As I lay awake listening to these various sounds and signs of a life that was novel to me, I thought how much they were to be preferred to the noises heard as I lay awake (not so long ago) in a private hospital in London. There I used to dread the approach of night. As soon as it grew dark many specimens of foul and miserable humanity began to issue from their lairs in the adjoining slums and made their needs and misery known to the world by a variety of cries. A raucous voice would bellow passionate love-songs, a quavering female voice would follow with a pseudo-religious ditty, then a boy with a painful attempt at jocularly would give a comic music-hall ditty in a squeaking voice, sometimes a broken-down actor declaimed a scene from Shakespeare. Generally their efforts were cut short by the jingle of some coppers on the pavement and an order to move on. How terrible to be reduced to having no other means

56 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

to keep starvation at bay than by doing something that people will pay you to stop doing ; in fact, they will pay you *not* to do it again.

Finally the nuisance was stopped in that particular square by the matron of the hospital getting a police-inspector to place a man on duty to prevent mendicants frequenting it. Poor creatures ! They only changed their beat.

These noises are not all that makes a London night hideous. There is the flare of electric light on the painted girls in the streets, the garish restaurants, the houses where youth and innocence are foully sacrificed, the flaring gin-palaces and their sodden, degraded customers, but there is also the other side of the picture—the open doors of the hospitals—(for it is after the public-houses close for the night and the frequenters are turned into the street, that the greatest number of accident-cases are brought to the hospital) ; the army of patient, duty-loving nurses, in hospitals, nursing-homes, and private houses, forgetful of self, cheerfully performing disgusting offices, fighting to save life—to save their patients from the consequences of following the lead of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

But I was glad to be away from it all, in fresh surroundings. I fell asleep at last and was quite

surprised that morning came so soon, and not prepared for the knock at my door that proclaimed seven o'clock, and the butler's voice saying: "Char tyar, mem Sahib" ("Tea is ready"). That meant he had placed my tray of tea and toast on a little table at my door and that when he retired I was to open my door and take it in. Indian men-servants, unlike Continental waiters, would never think of entering a lady's bedroom while she was in it.

Bob was due at his office at eight o'clock and would return for real breakfast at eleven. This breakfast is more like an early lunch. After dressing I put on my sun-topee (helmet) and began to explore my surroundings.

I must tell you about them next week.

CHAPTER IV

THE POMEGRANATE GROVE

I MUST now describe my surroundings for your benefit. In front of the Bungalow is a garden ; in the garden are cornflowers, phloxes, petunias, marigolds, and mignonette, besides small Persian rose-bushes and jasmine. There are also a few bushes of the Cashmere rose, the real original rose, from which all other varieties have descended or been propagated. It is a large, pink, single rose, excessively fragrant.

We are among the Punjaub irrigation colonies, and as I walked down the path I saw a dazzling sight at the end of the flower-garden, a mass of white and pale pink fruit-blossom, which had not been there two days ago, but the water had been turned on, and this was the result. It is said that the drain of irrigation canals has brought the waters of the Jumna so low that boats of any size cannot travel on it and the trade of the Jumna, which was considerable, is almost at an

end ; on the other hand irrigation means prosperity to the landowners and ryots of the Western Punjab. To return to my garden. After the blossoming fruit-garden, began the Pomegranate Grove and a thick tangle of dark green small-leaved trees, with flowers of bright, rather bricky-red hue. Most people know the dark crimson of the ripe pomegranate-fruit, but the flower is of quite a different shade. It was a very extensive grove, overshadowed by some lofty shade trees. It struck me as a lovely place wherein to sit and read, write or dream. At present, while the trees are in blossom, it is a quiet place, but later on, when fruit is ripening, it will be very noisy. Empty kerosine-tins with large stones in them will be attached to branches of some of the taller trees, and at the bottom of each such tree will be stationed a small boy whose business it is to pull a rope attached to the tins and make the stones rattle to scare away the marauding birds. Other boys will be there with bows from which they will let out mud pellets, not arrows, at the robbers.

At the end of the grove is a large tank much frequented by water-birds ; beyond that rise the walls and flat-roofed houses of the town. It is merely a small Indian country town, no shops

where anything required by English people could be procured, but it is the centre of a cotton-growing district, and the great Greek merchants, Messrs. Ralli, have offices here and an agent, who buys up cotton for the Bombay or Calcutta markets. This agent and his clerks are the only European residents. The town is uninteresting, but a little above it are the remains of the old fort, and bathed in the glorious Indian sunshine the general effect is quite picturesque.

The climate here is much colder than in Bombay. Here I am glad of a blanket at night, and a cloth coat and skirt are comfortable wear in the early morning. By ten o'clock the sun will have warmed the atmosphere and diffused a delicious warmth everywhere.

I have now chosen a corner of the pomegranate grove overshadowed by trees, and there I have placed a cane chair and a blue and white dhurrie for a carpet; this will be my own special boudoir, to which I shall retire when I want to have a chat with you on paper, and you can think of me as sitting there to compile my weekly budget.

I sit there so quietly that the birds and animals who inhabit the grove and neighbour-

hood take no notice of me, but go on with their daily life as if I were not there.

But I am beginning to make friends with some of them. The *minors* (Indian starlings) are very bold birds, and will come quite close to me to pick up crumbs. They are very handsome, graceful birds and most amusing, chattering incessantly and quarrelling with each other as they patter to and fro looking for food. The little squirrels, whose fur is grey with black stripes, are shyer than the *minors*, but even they are beginning to look out for crumbs, they will take a run up the trunk of a tree to nibble it, and then scamper back for more. I was amused to see one of them run in between two green parrots who were disputing over some grain, and carry it away while they were chattering. The monkeys who come into the tall trees beyond the grove are endlessly amusing, but I do not make friends with them, indeed they grin and hiss at me in rather a forbidding way, if I pass near a bough on which they are seated. One ventured into the verandah yesterday and the servants drove him off immediately, saying: "Monkeys are very bad people."

I write a little, and then pause to see what is going on around me, and I often witness a little

62 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

drama among my dumb neighbours. To-day it was enacted by a monkey and two crows. The monkey was seated on the topmost bough of a casaurina tree, which looked too fragile to support his weight, indeed he swayed backwards and forwards as he was eating a wood-apple.

One crow attacked in front, while the other pecked at his tail behind. He was quite equal to the occasion, and I admired the deftness with which he aimed a blow at the enemy in front, and then wheeled quickly round to give another blow with his paw to the crow attacking him in the rear. The crows retired for a few yards and then returned to the attack; this went on for some time, till they got tired and flew off with discordant cries.

Life in India nowadays seems very tame by comparison with the old times before British rule was firmly established in India. *Now* no one dare shake the pagoda-tree; *then* it held endless possibilities for attaining riches and power, and the tales of the exploits and achievements of French and English adventurers in those days, though actual facts, sound like extravagant romances.

Haryana, a district covering an area of three thousand square miles, was the scene of the

exploits of George Thomas, known as the "Irish Rajah," and it was in the old fort here that he made his last stand against the forces of Scindia.

George Thomas arrived in India towards the end of the eighteenth century, as a sailor before the mast, and after a series of marvellous adventures, during which he collected an army of followers, he made his power supreme throughout Hariana, and carved out a kingdom for himself from the ruins of the Moghul Empire. He made the town of Hansi his capital, and there he established a mint to coin the money to pay his troops; he also cast his own artillery, manufactured muskets and powder, making the best preparation he could for carrying on an offensive and defensive war against all comers, knowing that nothing but force of arms could maintain his authority. Thomas aspired to conquer the Punjaub, but the celebrated French General Perron (commander-in-chief of the army of the Mahratta Confederation, of which the Maharajah Scindia of Gwalior was the head), who had seized Delhi and established the Mahratta power throughout Central and part of Northern India, thought that Thomas was getting too powerful and that his progress must be stopped. After vainly endeavouring to get him to join

64 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

forces, or to enter into a compact limiting the area of his conquests, General Perron declared war on the "Irish Rajah," sending a force of six thousand Sikhs and sixty guns under the command of the French General Bourguien to invade Hariana.

A fierce warfare was waged. Thomas, who had some English officers with him, drove back the invading force at Georgeghar, sixty miles from Hansi, and then entrenched himself at Georgeghar, holding out for six weeks against the besieging force, which was repeatedly strengthened by reinforcements from Perron's army. Supplies being exhausted, Thomas's only chance was to break through the enemy's lines with his mounted men. He succeeded in doing this one night, but his followers were quickly dispersed by the troops which General Bourguien sent in pursuit. Thomas himself, with four English officers, following a circuitous route for one hundred and twenty miles, finally reached Hansi in safety. There they did their best to hold out, but the French general stormed the town and took it after a gallant defence had been made by the besieged. Thomas and a handful of followers were driven into the Fort, where they were bombarded for ten

days, but finally had to capitulate. In these scenes the well-known Anglo-Indian family of Skinner played a prominent part, fighting on the side of Maharajah Scindia's troops against Thomas. Colonel James Skinner has left a very graphic account of all that took place, in his *Memoirs*, which were lent to me by his descendant, now living at Hansi.

It is said that the "Irish Rajah" behaved in a most dignified manner at his first meeting with his conqueror, General Bourguien, to whom he gave up his sword; but the General invited him and his officers to a banquet, which degenerated into an orgy. Thomas, trying to drown grief in wine, became intoxicated and lost all prestige. Drink was his besetting weakness; he gave way to it after the collapse of his power, and never retrieved his fortune. After living for a time in obscurity in Benares, he died on his way home to Ireland.¹

It is eleven o'clock, so I must break off and go in to breakfast.

Resumed later. — Bob seemed dejected at breakfast and was very silent. I remarked on the crowd of natives collected round his office tent.

¹ Many adventurers and soldiers of fortune, notably General de Boigne, amassed fortunes and returned to Europe to enjoy them. Few had so dismal an end as Thomas.

“ Yes,” he said—“ blackguards most of them, and litigation is the joy of their life. It would take the wisdom of Solomon to know when they are speaking the truth. Outside a magistrate’s court, a number of men are always to be found who can be hired for fourpence to swear to *anything*. To be a false witness is a recognised profession.”

Bob, besides his duties as Assistant Revenue Collector, has magisterial powers, and is obliged to hold Courts of Justice wherever he goes. When breakfast was over, he had only half an hour’s respite, and then was obliged to return to his office tent, where he would be engaged till five o’clock.

So I was to have all the day to myself. Servants always retire to their quarters for food and siesta from twelve o’clock till two, and great quiet reigns in an Englishman’s house at that time. Who can describe the “hush” of noon-tide in India ? Early rising is the order of the day ; by noon the morning’s work is over, the chatter and passing to and fro of the servants have ceased ; there is no sound but the soft cooing of doves in the barboul-trees, or the creaking of the water-wheel in the distance, and the long-drawn-out cry of the water-drawer urging the patient bullocks to their work as they pace to

and from the well—they go forward to drop the buckets into the well, and by retreating pull back the ropes which draw up the buckets, which empty themselves into prepared receptacles. I had not yet got into the habit of taking a noon-day siesta, so I took out my phrase-book and began to study the Hindu vocabulary. As I could not speak the language and knew nothing of prices, Bob advised me to leave the house-keeping to the servants for the present—they were experienced men who had been with him some years ; but I meant to get the language and fit myself to be mistress of the household as soon as possible. How long I had been poring over the Hindustani alphabet I know not, when suddenly the “boy” rushed into the room and hurriedly began to close every window and door ; and other servants were doing the same all over the Bungalow.

“What is the matter ?” I asked.

“Kala paous” (“Black rain”), he replied.

Quite suddenly it grew dark, and a cloud of black dust seemed to pervade the air—it permeated through window and door chinks, and covered the furniture and made one choke. We were in the Western Punjaub, and a sand-storm from the adjoining Rajputana Desert was the

68 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

cause of the darkness and dust. Although it was only two o'clock the servants had to light the lamps, and the atmosphere was that of a London fog. By evening the storm died away, and the air became clear, but the house was in a dreadful state. These unpleasant storms occur not infrequently in this district. I felt glad I had not unpacked the pretty knick-knacks and cushions with which I had intended to make the rooms look homelike.

.

A week has passed since I last wrote to you, and as I was out on an expedition into the jungle with Bob, I missed the mail. I am now alone in the Bungalow, for Bob has had to go away for a few days into an outlying district where it was not convenient to take me. Had I gone, it would have meant double tent equipment, etc. Some servants are left to take care of me, and they feel honoured by the charge and will make it their business to see that Mem Sahib is well looked after. Then the Zemindar, who lives near by, called and assured me that I need not feel at all nervous, and asked me to summon him should any difficulties arise. He said : " Both I and my servants would lay down their lives rather than that any harm should befall the lady of our

English Sahib. To the English Raj we know we owe all our prosperity. But Mem Sahib need not be nervous, the people in this neighbourhood are all well-disposed."

I noticed when I went out for an evening stroll with the puttiwala at my heels, that the country people were very respectful. If a farmer was riding along, he would get off his pony and wait till I had passed.

"Unrest" was manifesting itself in other parts of India. Bombs had been thrown; the first killed two ladies at Mozufferpoor, and many people were getting into a state of panic.

I am lucky to have such loyal neighbours.

The Zemindar is rather a remarkable man, an Anglo-Indian who is a descendant of a mixed marriage. An ancestor had done great service to the British Raj, and raised a regiment in Mutiny time, a regiment that is known to fame as "The Yellow Boys," from the colour of their uniform. As a reward for services, large grants of land were bestowed on him, which had to be divided among a large family at his death.

Our friend and neighbour was a tall handsome man of polished manners, who had travelled a good deal in Europe and liked to talk of all he had seen. Here in Haryana he lived the life of

a country squire, looking after his property, fishing, and shooting. He had married a Mohammedan lady, and as I could not speak her language, and she could not speak mine, an exchange of visits could not have given much pleasure to either of us, so we waived the ceremony for the present. But the father brought his only child, on whom his hopes were centred, to visit me; he was a handsome, intelligent boy about ten years old. He was rather worried by an Eton collar, but nevertheless he enjoyed his tea and cake, and talked English very well. He soon asked leave to go and fly his kite—the favourite amusement of boys in India; he had a new one and was anxious to match it against that of his cousin. A kite contest is considered very exciting—even grown men often engage in it, and bets are exchanged as to the probable winner. The winner is the competitor whose kite remains longest in the air, and does not fall or get entangled in trees or other obstacles. Kite-flying requires skill in manipulating the strings, watching air-currents, etc. On this evening the new kite was victorious, so I heard later on. Kite-flying was not the only sport indulged in. On several evenings in the week the Zemindar would call the stablemen to

the cricket pitch and give his son and heir a lesson in the game. I had many interesting conversations with this neighbour, who had much to tell about old days in India and showed me some much-cherished, but now faded, photographs of well-known Indian officials who, with their ladies, had visited his father and grandfather; the ladies wore crinolines, paletots, turban hats, and other Early Victorian abominations in the way of costume. He also had a much-prized painting of Sir John Lawrence, when Governor of the Punjaub, before he became Lord Lawrence and Viceroy of India.

My friend greatly disapproved of what he considered the too great leniency of the Government of India in dealing with the crimes of the anarchists which had recently startled the Anglo-Indian world. The long-drawn-out trials disgusted him.

“If ‘Jan Larrens’ had been alive he would have strung the assassins up outside the Cashmere Gate at Delhi next day, and have done with them. That is the way to put a stop to such crimes,” he said.

“And last week I was at Lahore, and there were students in white dhotas, and fifteen-rupee clerks, walking up and down the platform,

pushing past the English travellers and talking in loud voices of recent events, as if they really thought they had influence and could coerce the British Raj! Pooah! My blood boiled!"

It is true that the half-educated, weak-minded youths who have been set on by stronger minds to assassinate English officials have been greatly influenced by the love of notoriety. They are told that they will be considered patriotic heroes—that the world will talk of them, that there will be a long trial and their names will be in the newspapers every day—and several have had their photographs taken just before attempting or committing the crime, with a view to their picture being published in the papers and sold in the streets. These misguided youths learn their mistake too late, and bear the punishment which is really deserved by those who corrupted their minds and made tools of them. Their love of notoriety is not gratified.

In old times, under Indian rulers, those persons about to suffer the punishment of death were dressed in a short tunic, their hair loosened and covered with red powder and flowers (as is usual when a corpse is carried to the funeral pyre). In this guise they were seated on a camel and paraded through crowds of spectators

to the place where the sentence was to be carried out.

Nowadays under British rule no such exciting scenes buoy up the criminal to suffer the penalty of death.

In the cold grey dawn the condemned mounts the scaffold erected in the walled-in courtyard of the prison, and meets his doom in the presence of no witnesses besides the few officials whose duty it is to see the sentence carried out.

In the days of the Indian Mutiny, English commanders adopted an Eastern custom in punishing traitors ; the ringleaders were blown from the guns.

An English official has recorded his opinion that this was an excellent method of inflicting capital punishment, because it was "painless to the condemned, terrible to the beholder."

But it is no longer adopted by the British Government.

CHAPTER V

NOTABLE INDIAN WOMEN IN PAST AND PRESENT TIMES

LAST night I had a surprise. The moonlight was lovely, so after dinner I strolled out into the garden and was astonished to see that one side of the Burgalow was covered with beautiful white flowers—they had not been there in the afternoon. Bob told me they were called “moonflowers” because they only open when the moon is bright, and only live one night. They are very large cup-like flowers growing on a creeping vine of the convolvulus tribe.

I heard a great disturbance in the servants' quarters this morning and I sent to inquire the cause of the loud outcries and wailings that reached my ears. After a while the cook's wife, and a woman she introduced as her sister, appeared before me wringing their hands and weeping. After much delay and with the aid of the butler, who knew some English, I found out what had happened. At an early hour the

sister had arrived bringing with her a daughter in a shocking condition, with a bleeding face, the blood coming through the rags with which it was bandaged. A bad man, whose offers of marriage had been refused by the parents, had come to the house while they were in the fields and the girl was left alone to do the cooking. He tried to persuade the girl to go away with him, but she refused, and when he caught hold of her, she strenuously resisted him, being tall and strong. But he got out a knife and tried to cut off her nose; fortunately at this moment some neighbours, attracted by the girl's cries, rushed in. He had only cut into the bridge of the nose between the eyes. It was a dastardly act, and the girl, at best, would be marked for life. To cut off her nose is the usual punishment for an unfaithful wife, and this innocent girl would now have to go through life marked as if she were a bad character.

Our neighbour the Zemindar, whose advice I asked, said she must be sent at once to the Mission Hospital in a town twelve miles away, and he provided a cart to convey her there—a little country cart with a covering of matting to keep off the sun. I had a mattress placed on the bottom of the cart, and on this she lay,

and set off to the hospital accompanied by her mother and aunt. Her assailant was caught by the police and sentenced to two years in prison. Banutai (this was the girl's name) was skilfully treated in hospital and when she came out, she still possessed a nose, though there was an ugly dent where it joined the forehead between the eyes, which greatly spoiled her appearance.

Cutting off noses so frequently takes place that hospital doctors have become skilful in treating the wounds. If the nose has been entirely severed from the face a piece of skin is grafted into the forehead and drawn down over a false nose. In many cases the result is successful.

It is to be hoped that doctors will soon have less practice in these cases, and that the custom of cutting off a wife's nose will soon be discontinued by angry husbands, for, though very careful not to interfere with the manners and customs of the Indian people when not actually reprehensible, the British Government cannot tolerate mutilation, and feels justified in trying to stamp out this offence by inflicting severe punishment on the perpetrators.

It would be difficult for a girl, disfigured as

Banutai was, to obtain a husband, so the parents, who had been very much impressed with the kindness shown to her at the Mission Hospital, decided to ask the Mission ladies to take her into their school, and teach her to read and write and to speak English, and to use a sewing-machine, then she would be fit to be an ayah and wait on English ladies.

“And if you are here, Mem Sahib, you will take her, will you not? and then she will be happy all her days,” so they said to me.

You must not suppose that because some men of the lower classes commit acts of brutality on women, that therefore cruelty to women is common or prevalent here. You might as well judge Englishmen by the standard of conduct perceptible in a European city slum, where we hear that outrages on women frequently occur. English people who come to India soon get disabused of the idea that is so very prevalent among stay-at-home people in England—that the women of India are *downtrodden*. There is no country in the world where the influence of women is so paramount as in India. In no other country are there so many henpecked husbands. Political Agents will tell you that if there is trouble in a Native State, there is always a woman at the

bottom of it. It may be a dancing girl, a wife, a mother or grandmother, according to whose influence is in the ascendant, but more often the latter. An Indian ruler may wish to make reforms in his State, but the ladies are too conservative, and he will say to his adviser: "I should like to do it, but my mother or grandmother is against it." The ladies do not scruple to work on his feelings, and say: "If such or such a thing is done, we will throw ourselves down the well," for so far female influence is in general that of ignorance, superstition, and sensuality.

We know one ruling chief among our own acquaintances who is completely terrorised by his wife. If asked why he has done certain ill-judged things, or signed such a document to his own detriment, he will reply: "My wife wished it; if I had refused I should not be alive at the end of the week."

A well-known leader in the Mohammedan world had, while on a visit to London, remarked to an English lady, the wife of an Indian official, that when he returned to India he should try to get the ladies of his household to take some interest in what is going on in the world, and to learn some of the things that English ladies learn and

do. When the lady in question returned to India, she met the Mohammedan gentleman, and, remembering their conversation on the subject, said : " Well ! Have you reformed your ladies ? "

" No indeed," he replied. " They very soon reformed *me*, and made me think that old ways are best for us."

Indian women have often very strong characters, and have played important parts in Indian history.

I call to mind the Rani of Jhansi who, in Mutiny times, led her troops to battle, and the English commander-in-chief said she was the best " man " on the enemy's side. Further back there was Ahlyabai Holkareen, the Rani of Indore, so widely known as a wise and beneficent ruler. Many of her benevolent foundations are doing good work up to the present day. I have just read a little memoir of her life, of which I will give you an outline.

Ahlyabai was the wife of Kunderao Holkar, Maharajah of Indore, at the end of the eighteenth century. She lost her husband at the age of twenty-one, her only son died young, so she took up the burden of government and ruled the State of Indore for thirty years. Ahlyabai was like a mother to her subjects—the poorest had

80 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

access to her, and she listened to all their grievances, and did everything possible for their welfare. Indore, the seat of government, was only a small village when her reign began, but she gradually made it a fine town. She also proved herself able to protect her State against aggression. At that date the Peshwa of Poona was a sort of overlord of all the Mahratta States, and once when pressed for money he sent to ask Ahlyabai to lend him some, knowing that her treasury was well filled. She replied that all her money was dedicated to works of charity and piety, but that if he could prove that he was a Brahmin, and would come in the guise of a Brahmin mendicant to ask her alms, she would gladly bestow all she possessed on him. The Peshwa could not brook the idea of stooping to such means of getting the money he needed, so he determined to attack Ahlyabai, take her by surprise, and seize the treasury of Indore. But she heard of his intention and sent word to him : ‘Think well before you do it. If you defeat a woman, the victory will not bring you glory ; if I defeat you, shame will be your portion.’ While her Ambassador was travelling to the Peshwa’s quarters, Ahlyabai gathered together five hundred women, chosen from her subjects,

armed them, and mounted them on horseback, and she herself rode at their head to the place where the Peshwa and his troops were encamped. The soldiers refused to take up arms against the women, saying it was contrary to the precepts of their religion, and if they did so, they would be covered with shame in the eyes of their fellows. The Peshwa could not deny this, so he had an interview with Ahlyabai, after which he came to the conclusion that he would not gain much by interfering with a woman of her calibre. So he begged her forgiveness, made his peace with her, and retired with his soldiers, telling her to spend the money as she thought best.

Throughout India, from north to south, traces of Ahlyabai's munificence and benevolence are to be seen. Temples and shrines built and endowed by her are found in many places, also houses of rest for pilgrims at holy places, others where Brahmins could be lodged and fed, and tanks to supply water—a first requirement in India, not only for drinking, but for bathing, which is a religious observance.

A description of how Ahlyabai passed her day is not unworthy of attention. She is considered the pattern of what a woman of her race should

be, and her mode of life carried out the Hindu woman's ideal.

She rose very early, and her first words were an invocation of the Deity, then she bathed and performed her devotions,¹ after which she sat down to listen to a portion of the Sacred Books, read aloud by a priest. That concluded, she went to distribute food to Brahmins² and other poor people who might have collected at her palace gates, and when this task was completed she had her own first meal, at the end of which a few verses of praise to God were recited (practically a grace), and then she retired for a short siesta.

On rising, Ahlyabia put on the dress worn at ceremonies, and went into the hall, where her Ministers were transacting the business of the State. After giving audience to any persons who might be awaiting her, she inquired into, and gave orders about, all the affairs of State that were under consideration, occupying herself in this manner till sunset, when she left

¹ She invoked the Deity—God—and then performed her devotions before the images of various lesser gods. For the Hindus believe in the one omnipotent God, but also pray to very many other gods—much as Roman Catholics pray to saints—asking their intercessions.

² To feed Brahmins, the sacred or priestly caste, is considered one of the most meritorious acts a Hindu can perform.

the hall and went into her private apartments to perform her evening devotions, and take the evening meal. This accomplished, she returned to the hall and attended to affairs of State till midnight, when she retired to rest.

She was always plainly dressed and humble in her opinion of herself, saying she knew she was responsible to God for the welfare of her subjects, and would have to give an account to Him for all her actions as a ruler.

Thus she lived for thirty years, setting an example not to be despised by women of any race or position.

Many Hindu women in a humbler position mould their lives after a somewhat similar fashion—the day spent between devotion and household duties, which, with these, take the place that affairs of State took in the life of Ahlyabai Holkareen.

Hindu ladies of the modern world still show much capacity for government. The Begum of Bhopal I have mentioned. The Maharanee of Mysore ruled the State so well during the minority of her son, the present Maharajah, that Government awarded her a salute of nineteen guns, in token of approbation.

Though the mass of the women of India may

still use their influence on the side of ignorance and superstition, there are many fine exceptions to be found, women fit to be leaders in any cause. In the Bombay Presidency may be named the late Mrs. Sorabji of Poona, and her daughters, and Mrs. Ranade. Also Parbatti-bai Athwale and Pandita Ramabai, who have worked so strenuously to raise the status of the child widows, and to teach them to earn an honourable living.

I met in Bombay some very cultured Indian ladies who, while keeping to their own habits and customs, yet desire that women should be educated and be fit to hold their own and to undertake all such duties as are suitable for a woman to fulfil. One such lady was telling me about her two daughters. The eldest did not wish to marry, she wished to study for the medical profession. Her very unusual parents said: "We shall not force her to marry, we are glad that she wishes to lead a useful life and to benefit her fellow women."

It is very unusual for parents to be willing that a daughter shall remain unmarried, for the idea that prevails among orthodox Hindus is that marriage is the only career for a woman. If one listens to the talk of children, say of

seven or eight years old, who are playing together, their talk will generally be about marriage, and, if meeting for the first time, the first question will be "Who is your husband?" or "When are you going to be married?"

In the enlightened family I have mentioned the younger girl was inclined to be noisy and pushing "So we call her 'Suffragette,'" said her mother, laughing

Much commiseration is wasted on those Indian ladies who live in seclusion and do not appear in public or mix in general society But the greater number of them prefer it, and cling to their privacy as the privilege of rank. I know of a certain princess whose husband was educated in England, and he wished her to adopt English customs and mix in society He used to take her out driving in an open phaeton, and expected her to appear at dinner-parties where English gentlemen as well as ladies were guests.

She resented this bitterly, saying "He treats me as if I were a low-caste woman, or a dancing girl"

Very old ladies whose charms have long since vanished are just as particular about "purdah"

as if they were young and attractive, and if paying a visit, will insist that on descending from the carriage a purdah (curtain) shall be held up on either side from carriage to entrance, to prevent any bystanders catching a glimpse of them as they step out of the carriage to enter the house.

In Bengal a number of Indian ladies formed an association to bring about the abolition of the purdah system, as the custom of ladies living in seclusion is called. In the Bombay Presidency some ladies of rank formed an association to resist this innovation and to maintain the purdah system.

In the same way in England there are Suffragettes and there is also a league of those who are against women having the vote.

The purdah system fosters self-consciousness. I remember a Mohammedan lady who, with her husband's full consent, went about everywhere as Europeans do, telling me how immensely astonished she was to find that she attracted little attention. "Every one seemed pre-occupied with their own affairs, and took no notice of me," she said.

As I have said previously, the influence of women is paramount in Indian circles. When

they are enlightened and wish to change their position or customs, the change will be made, but for the most part, at present they do not desire it, and their influence is against progress, and for superstition and caste prejudice.

CHAPTER VI

A PILGRIMAGE AND A JOURNEY OFF THE RAILWAY LINE

BOB had to go to a remote district in his collectorship, so I have been paying a visit to my old friends in the Bombay Presidency. We are off the main line of railway here, and in order to catch the express which passes very early in the morning we have to get up at 4 a.m. and drive eight miles to a station.

I rather enjoy this. I get some sleep before starting, but have to put my alarum-clock to wake me at the right time, for I cannot depend on the ayah, who is generally snoring loudly on the floor of my dressing-room when I pass through to the carriage. But what use is it to expect from people qualities they do not possess? Indian natives have no idea of time, and they are also inveterate sleepers. I have known a puttiwala left to guard the house when we went out to dinner, and when we returned, in spite of the noise of carriage-wheels and

jingling of horses' bits and chains as we drove up to the door, he continued to sleep soundly as we stepped over his body through the front door, and much shouting and a few kicks from his master were needed to rouse him

Well, I enjoy my early departures. In the courtyard there are generally a few corpse-like figures to be seen, for the native shrouds his head and body with a white sheet and lies stretched out full length on the ground, needing no other resting-place for a good night's repose. The carriage is already loaded with luggage, so we step quietly in, and drive along one of those roads so common in India, where fine trees are planted along each side, over-arching the road and forming an avenue. I enjoy watching the paling of the stars, and the first sign of dawn in the east, the faint scarcely noticeable line of light on the horizon, then the roseate hues gradually overspreading the eastern sky, and almost before one knows it, daylight has come. As we passed through the village we noticed all the signs that the new day had begun—men rising and shaking off their shroud-like night-clothing, sitting outside their huts cleaning their teeth with a piece of wood (the first stage of the daily toilette), women with brass pots on

90 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

their heads going to the well to draw water, boys collecting the goats and driving them out to pasture.

What a feature in Indian life are the goats !

Generally the village flock, belonging to several owners, is entrusted to a few boy goatherds, who carry long sticks with a crook at the end, wherewith they pull down the branches of trees till they can reach up to gather the leaves for their flock, for leaves of trees are the goats' tit-bits. The flock will consist of goats of all sizes and colours—brown, black, white, piebald fierce old billy-goats, and gentler mothers with kids skipping by their side. One of the signs that the day's work is nearly over and the hour of sunset approaching, is the procession of goats filing home from the pasture. I used to watch this every day as I sat at tea in my verandah.

What places a goat will climb to ! In the narrow street of an Indian town you may see them perched on the top of a high wall, or slumbering peacefully on a narrow ledge of the roof. In poor people's homes the goats are part of the family, live and sleep in the only room, and one may see a little girl come home in the evening leading her goat, who will presently sit by her side and share her evening meal.

A kid is often "the one ewe lamb" of an Indian home. A poor man came to appeal for justice at one of Bob's Courts. He complained of a neighbour :

"He has stolen *all* my property, everything I possessed !"

"What did your property consist of ?"

"A goat !"

This gives some idea of the poverty of many Indian families, the only possession, one goat—value four or five shillings !

Goat's milk is much prized ; it is considered more nourishing than cow's milk, and doctors often order it for invalids. Occasionally when we have been camping out we could get no other milk, but on those occasions I never enjoyed my tea, for goat's milk has a very strong flavour.

The "roast mutton," which cook generally proposes when asked to think of a *new* dish for dinner, is really goat's flesh, which forms the staple fare ; except in English stations, the cow being held sacred by Hindus, beef is not obtainable elsewhere. On taking up residence in a station where there are plenty of English living, the first thing to do is to put one's name down for the "Beef Club," to ensure a supply.

92 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

The goats have led me to digress from the account of my journey to Bombay. When we arrived at the station we found an immense crowd of natives on the platform—they were going on pilgrimage to a shrine at which a festival was to be held. When the train drew up, they rushed at it, and in spite of my puttíwala's efforts, I should not have got a seat had it not been for the good offices of one of the pilgrims, a Brahmin doctor of my acquaintance. I had been accustomed to see him in European dress, tweed suit (though he always wore Brahmin headgear), and I hardly recognised him in his white linen dhoti and linen upper dress that he now wore, but he made way for me through the surging crowd, who all know a Brahmin when they see one, and fell back at his orders. First, second, or third class was all the same to the country people—but when once they saw a Madam Sahib seated, they knew the compartment was not for them, and though some opened the door, they retreated directly they caught sight of me.

A pilgrimage is a joyful occasion for the Indian ryot (villager). The whole family go—from the toothless grandmother to the squalling baby in arms—and when they arrive at the shrine

or temple, after they have performed their devotions they spend the time as at a fair, for all sorts of caterers attend to provide sweets, other eatables, and amusements. In some places, at greatly venerated shrines, the concourse is so enormous that it has been found worth while to build a branch railway especially for the conveyance of pilgrims'. The conditions of life at these gatherings are insanitary to the last degree, and often cause an outbreak of cholera. Last year many corpses of people who died of cholera on the way home were found on the road from Pandharpur to Poona, and cholera was taken to many villages by returning pilgrims.

The municipality of Pandharpur, who derive immense profits from a head-tax on each pilgrim, are alive to these evils, and are spending a large sum on drainage, and intend to enforce sanitary regulations.

Even the most bigoted Brahmin priests are beginning to admit the worth of English ideas as to sanitation.

¹ Some ascetics *roll* from Poona to Pandharpur. It takes a month, but they become so expert that they roll smoothly over stones or other obstacles. They go in the middle of the road, and travel at the rate of four miles a day. This mode of pilgrimage is thought very meritorious and is generally undertaken in performance of a vow.

14 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

At another city in the Bombay Presidency where a vast crowd of pilgrims had assembled on the banks of a sacred river, cholera broke out as a result of drinking the contaminated water, Government sent up a medical officer to fight the disease, and prevent its spreading. He actually succeeded in persuading the Brahmins to allow the water of the river to be disinfected, and they themselves put the permanganate of potash into the springs. Years ago they would have considered this unutterable pollution.

My journey was very uninteresting along the edge of the Rajputana Desert, most of the way nothing to see but a wide stretch of sand and a few rocks, and black sand penetrated through every chink of windows and shutters, covering one's clothing and face. I was glad when we reached Ahmedabad and branched off through a pastoral country to Bombay. But Bombay was not my destination. I still had half a day and a whole night to spend in the train. Leaving Bombay on the Poona line, the scenery is very picturesque. The sea comes far inland, and makes Salsette an island, and runs into many pretty bays and inlets, over which graceful white-sailed craft and fishing-boats were skimming. A river runs into the

sea here, winding hither and thither zig-zag fashion, and the low-lying damp land produces luxuriant vegetation—lofty palms, and giant flame-of-the-forest trees, with their brilliant blossoms.

How pleased I was to arrive at the lovely Residency, my friend's Indian home. The day after my arrival, all the Europeans in the station came to call on me. They must call on the Resident's guests—that is etiquette.

“Calling” is a tyranny from which no English people living in India can escape. The rules vary in different Presidencies, and contain many mysteries which are pitfalls to the new-comer.

We were all to go off on the following day to a neighbouring State, to be present at a ceremony which I much wished to see. A young chief was to be “put on the gadi”—that is to say, he was to be declared of age, and endowed with the full powers of a ruling chief, which include the power of life and death over their subjects.

The chief restriction of their power is that they may not make war upon or plunder another State. All differences between rulers of Native States must be settled by reference to the Paramount Power, the British Government.

A native ruler may not employ a foreigner, (such as a Frenchman or a German) in his State as a civil or a military officer. The States are exempt from the jurisdiction of the ordinary Law Courts of the Presidency, but any criminals from British territory who may have taken refuge in a native State must be extradited.

The Maharajahs of the great States won their lands by conquest in ancient days, but the origin of the smaller States (such as the one we are now visiting) was, that larger or smaller grants of land were bestowed on individuals for services rendered, and on condition of their maintaining a certain number of troops for the service of some overlord, such as the great Moghul in North India, or the Peshwa of Poona in the west. Their rank was determined in old times by the number of bowmen they supplied. Most of the States in the South Mahratta Country (where we now are), except the great State of Kolhapur, had been feudatories of the Peshwa of Poona. The last Peshwa broke his engagements with the British, and was deposed for perfidy about 1818, by the British Government, after the third and last Mahratta war. The rulers had only to transfer their allegiance from the Peshwa to the British

Government ; this they all did on being assured that they would retain the rank and dignities they had hitherto enjoyed. Instead of a contribution of troops, a tribute of money proportionate to revenue was agreed on, and, as previous overlords retained the right of resuming their lands if they failed in duty, so the British Government would intervene in cases of flagrant abuse of power or gross mismanagement.

If a ruling chief dies while his son and successor is a minor, the boy becomes a ward of the British Government, which takes the place of a father to him. He will generally be sent to the Rajahs' College at Rajkot, or the one at Ajmere or to Aligargh, according to whether he is of Hindu, Rajput or Mohammedan descent ; after leaving college an English tutor will probably be appointed to read with him and act generally as bear-leader.

To instal a chief "on the gadi" is one of the duties of a Political Agent, except in the case of very important rajahs, when the Governor of the Presidency generally takes that office on himself.

The Political Agent is adviser to all the chiefs in the district called his Agency. If he sees that things are not going well in a State, he will warn a ruler ; if his warnings are not attended to, he

will report to the Governor. In cases of gross misrule, the British Government has power to depose a chief, but this power is only exercised in extreme cases, and with great reluctance.

The young Chief of the State to whom we were going was well known to, and much liked by, his Political Agent, having lived in his immediate vicinity for several years under the auspices of an English tutor.

I enjoy the picturesqueness and small pomps and ceremonies of official life in India—our drive to the station with an escort of mounted lancers, the red carpet and special train awaiting us, and other amenities that make the wheels of life roll smoothly. We had two hours in the train before arriving at the station nearest to, but twenty miles distant from, our destination. We had started early and, on arriving at the station, were conducted to a large tent pitched not far off, where we found well-spread tables and a good lunch awaiting us. Shall I give you the menu?

Bacon and eggs.

Mutton (goat) cutlets, green peas, and potatoes.

Chicken curry and rice.

Fruits.

Tea and coffee. Whisky-and-soda.

I never pass the curry dish. Curry and rice is

the national dish for all classes of the Indian people, and it is well chosen, and adapted to the life of the country. The spices and condiments contained in it are so stimulating that after a good plateful of curry and rice one feels as much refreshed as after a cup of strong coffee or a glass of wine.

Hindus are vegetarians, and the poor people can work hard on a meal of vegetable curry and rice. The poorest cannot afford rice and will maintain life on *barkree* (bread made of coarse corn like millet), but with this they will eat a little chutnee (a kind of jam made up of all sorts of appetising and stimulating spices).

After lunch we got into vehicles that awaited us. We were a party numbering twenty, and the Chief had sent six well-horsed carriages to convey us to his State. In Native States, whatever else may be wanting, there are generally plenty of carriages and horses, though I must admit the carriages vary as to soundness, state of repair, and comfort afforded. The one for the Political Agent and his wife was a handsome, well-hung modern barouche. The one I found a seat in was not so comfortable, the seat was too high and the roof too low, and I could not sit upright in it. However, by the time we got

100 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

to the village where we were to change horses, the power of the sun was decreasing, and I asked my companions to consent to the head of the carriage being lowered, and I enjoyed the remainder of the journey better than the first part. The place where we stopped for relays was a large village ; the inhabitants are famous for their skill in weaving, and in front of many huts stood the old-fashioned wooden loom, with the weaver, often a woman, walking to and fro twisting the bright-coloured yarn around each end of the frame. Very beautiful are the shades of colour used by the weavers for the "saree"—the long piece of cloth which constitutes an Indian woman's dress ; it is pleated into a petticoat held in place by a metal band round the waist, and the end is wrapped as a scarf round the head and shoulders. Green, purple, and shot colours are seen, but red of various shades, or dark blue with a red border, are the colours most worn by the Mahratta women. A saree with a silken border is much prized, and to possess a saree all of silk is the sign of having a well-to-do husband. The husband has to provide the wife's trousseau, and the richness of the sarees and the amount of jewellery he agrees to provide go a long way in deciding the acceptance or rejection of his offer

when marriage negotiations are entered upon by the respective parents of the bride and bridegroom.

Some women have bad taste and choose for daily wear a piece of large-patterned Manchester print in preference to native goods. They quite spoil their appearance. My ayah once appeared in a print saree covered with groups of figures representing nursery rhymes—Red Riding Hood, etc. She looked quite grotesque, but wept when told to keep it for wear in her own house, and that she was not to come into my presence wearing it.

Many of the weavers at our stopping-places left their looms and came to stare at their Chief's guests. Most of the would start late at night and walk to the town to take part in the next day's rejoicings. All would be given a dinner, and the women at least a *choli*. This is the sleeveless bodice not reaching the waist-line, which is all that Indian women wear under the saree. It is not pretty, for it leaves a broad piece of brown skin uncovered between the end of the *choli* and the skirt of the saree. The women and children who crowded round our carriage were what is known in India as *jungli*, that is, rustic and boorish, and they did not know that it

102 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

was ill-mannered to laugh loudly as they pointed at the ladies' headgear ; some of us were wearing sun-topees, others large fantastic-shaped hats, and these are always a source of amazement to Indian women, whose only head-covering is the end of the saree thrown over the head like a scarf.

I remember a native officer, returned from Coronation¹ festivities in London, expressed to me his great astonishment at hearing that two, three, and even five pounds was not an uncommon price to pay for a lady's hat. " Only to be worn perhaps a few weeks ! What sinful waste ! "

The weaving women and children had stared their fill, and some beggars forced their way to the carriage and displayed their sores, and we asked the grooms to send them away, for many were lepers, objects so wretched that they would haunt the memory long afterwards, and we knew they were not poor. Beggars in India are always well off—no native ever refuses a beggar, and a physical disability is a source of income, for begging is a profession not looked down upon in India. The lepers might and ought to have been in one of the comfortable homes provided for them by Government or by Missions, but

¹ King Edward's Coronation.

they prefer begging, and their being at large is a menace to the public health, for leprosy is contagious though not infectious.

At length the teams were harnessed, and we set off again, driving through well-wooded up-land country. The giant tamarind-trees excited our admiration—they must have been centuries old, for the growth of the tamarind-tree is very slow. I was once asked what kind of tree I would like to have planted round a school of which I had laid the foundation-stone. On suggesting tamarind-trees I was told that I should never see the effect—"that would be for the great-grandchildren of the present scholars." For other reasons, too, my suggestion was not approved. Tamarind-trees, with their delicate leaves and graceful branches, are very beautiful, but are considered unhealthy. Tents are never pitched under tamarind-groves, for fear of fever.

We had enjoyed our drive, but were not sorry to arrive at our destination. The Chief was waiting on the steps of the Guest House to receive us.

The Guest House could only accommodate the Political Agent and his wife, and the Assistant Political Agent. Tents had been pitched for the rest of us in a prettily laid-out camping-ground,

with gravelled paths edged with box, and lamp-posts with lamps at intervals. Each tent was ticketed with the name of the visitor who was to occupy it. Mine was very comfortable ; besides the bed, it contained a dressing-table and several chairs, an almirah for hanging dresses, and my trunk, which had been sent on the previous day. At the back of each tent was a bathroom (the first necessity of life in India), provided with a washing-stand and ware, and one of the large zinc washing-tubs used as baths throughout India, which newcomers think funny. In the centre of the camp was a large tent fitted up as a drawing-room, with chairs and sofas of red and yellow satin.

After a warm bath I dressed for dinner (I had been told to bring my best dress), and with my neighbours made my way up to the Guest House. The whole party were to dine in a large tent pitched in the compound. The table was tastefully decorated with flowers, and we had an excellent dinner, with champagne, while a band outside discoursed sweet music. After dinner the Chief and some other Indian gentlemen joined us, chairs had been placed in the compound, and we sat out under the stars and chatted for an hour ; then the Burra Mem Sahib (the chief lady), the

Political Agent's wife, gave the signal to retire, for to-morrow's ceremony would begin at 8 a.m.

As we walked back to our own tents we were preceded by a puttiwalla with a lantern, which he held close to the ground, and in the other hand he had a substantial staff with which he stamped on the ground at each step. These were precautions against snakes.

Most newcomers to India apparently expect to find snakes on every path, scorpions in all quarters, and a tiger lurking behind every bush. On this evening my neighbour in the next tent rushed to my door, while I was brushing my hair, and cried: "Let me in! Let me in! What *shall* we do? I hear a tiger growling!"

"Very likely," I replied dryly, "but it is safe behind the bars of its cage in the Chief's menagerie!"

She retired somewhat crestfallen.

I have lived some years in India without being harmed by tigers, snakes, or scorpions. Once there was an alarm. A cobra was seen in the rafters of the pantry. But the servants got long sticks, routed it out, and, when it fell to the ground, quickly battered it to death.

Scorpions are only associated in my mind with a drunken cook who, having asked for one day's

108 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

leave, did not return till three days had elapsed. Then he appeared before me limping, with a great show of feebleness, and said: "I was stung by a scorpion. What could I do? How could I come back till I was better?"

I think drink was the only poison that had entered his system, for I watched him limp back to the servants' quarters, and saw that as soon as he thought he was out of my sight he could stand upright and move about as usual.

I must tell you further details of my visit next week

CHAPTER VII

A MODEL NATIVE STATE—A CHIEF'S INSTALLATION— POSITION AND POWERS OF INDIAN CHIEFS

THE day of the Chief's installation dawned bright and clear. At 7 a.m. I heard the ever-welcome sound, "*Char tyar*" ("Tea ready"), and the tea-tray deposited at the entrance to my tent. Then at eight o'clock there were carriages waiting to take us to the Durbar Hall, where a large audience had assembled—not only all the State officials and subordinates, but also many neighbouring land-owners and some chiefs: the latter were mostly relatives of our host, who was the head of a large clan.

He was beautifully dressed in a long coat of red and gold brocade, and wore a gold and white turban with jewelled aigrette. Many rows of priceless pearls lay on his breast, but his most valued adornment was a diamond bracelet, a present from King Edward when travelling in India as Prince of Wales, to the young Chief's predecessor.

At one end of the room was a *daïs*, with a seat for the Political Agent, and the *gadi* (chair-of-state on which the hero of the day would be installed), and the English visitors occupied seats in the hall, near the *daïs*.

The young Chief and the Indian gentleman who had acted as Administrator of the State during his minority went to the entrance to meet the Political Agent and escort him to the *daïs*. All present stood up at the entrance of the Agent and remained standing till he was seated. This courtesy was also shown to the wife of the Political Agent, when she entered alone, some minutes before her husband.

When all were seated, the Administrator gave an account of his stewardship, reading aloud a statement as to what had been the amount of reserve fund and the average annual revenue of the State at the late chief's death, what it now amounted to, the amount spent on improvements, roads, schools, hospitals, etc., and the amount saved and now lying in the bank at the Chief's disposal.

When the Administrator had finished his report, the Political Agent arose, and commented on it with somewhat tempered approval. He told us afterwards that he had not been quite satisfied

with the administration ; in spite of the cost of famine-relief works, alleged as an excuse, there might have been a larger amount of savings to the Chief's credit, consequently the Administrator would *not* retire with flying colours, nor be awarded the title of Rao Bahadur in the next Birthday Honours list, as would have been the case if his Administration had won the approval of the Political Agent.

After commenting on the Administrator's report, the Political Agent turned to the young Chief, and first read aloud and then presented to him the Sanad¹ of the Governor, conferring on him the enjoyment of his estates and investing him with the full powers of a ruling chief.

This was followed by a little exhortation to the young ruler as to his new duties and the way the Paramount Power expected him to fulfil them. It contained a word of warning in reference to a predecessor more than suspected of disloyalty, conveyed in terms that were understood and appreciated by the audience, and which made the young Chief fidget on his seat. The speaker ended with words of affection and praise—he was confident

¹ Patent. A Government decree conferring certain powers on the possessor.

his young friend would not disappoint their expectations.

The young Chief, who was not a ready speaker, replied somewhat haltingly, and was understood to express his gratitude to the Political Agent, "who had been a father to him," and his unswerving loyalty to the British Government.

The ladies of the Chief's family were present, seated in a gallery that ran round the Durbar Hall, protected from the public gaze by *chicks*, that is, blinds or curtains made of fine strips of bamboo, which allow those behind to see everything that is passing, but prevent any one the other side from looking in.

After the speeches the assembly dispersed, the English visitors to breakfast, and the Chief and his retinue to inspect the various centres where repasts were to be given to the inhabitants of the State, poor and rich.

After breakfast we visited the Chief's stables, which were very extensive and kept in apple-pie order, rather unusual in a Native State. There was quite an army of stable helpers, dressed in canary-coloured livery.

In Europe the maintenance of such an establishment would have been costly, but as the pay of a groom is about five shillings *monthly*, and

horse-keep twenty-five shillings, the cost in India is comparatively very small. What does cost money is the keep of an elephant. Here there was only one—the State elephant in solitary grandeur. We were advised not to approach too near, as he was *waheet* (ill-tempered).

After we had looked over the stables, a messenger came to say that the Bai Sahib (the Chief's wife) was waiting to receive the Political Agent's wife; being the latter's guest, I was privileged to accompany her. We found the little Bai Sahib richly dressed in a lovely rose-colour silken saree, with a broad gold border. She wore heavy silver anklets, and rings on her toes, the toe-rings bearing a medallion in the shape of a fish. She also wore a large pearl nose-ring. In spite of these somewhat barbaric adornments, she herself was quite up-to-date in conversation, speaking English easily. She was not pretty, but bright and intelligent, far from shy, doing the honours, garlanding, etc., in a very becoming manner. Her husband is rather progressive in his ideas. He takes her out riding with him (she rides astride), and allows her to drive herself in a tonga with a pair of spirited ponies. She confided to us her great wish to go to England.

After taking leave of her, we joined the rest of the party in a large hall, which might have been called a museum. In it were arranged curiosities, sporting trophies, and articles that former chiefs had brought back from Europe, mostly mechanical toys, such as a canary that flapped its wings and sang when wound up, and many clocks of all sorts and sizes, and several large glass chandeliers.

The gardens and all surroundings of the Chief's residence were beautifully kept, the village streets were clean, and there was a neatness and tidiness about the whole place which is rare in India.

An explanation of this was given by an old retainer who acted as our cicerone. "The late Chief was very fond of cleanness, and it has been kept up since his death."

We rested in our tents during the noonday heat, but after tea there were sports to be attended. We watched schoolboys running three-legged and sack races, tugs-of-war by the police, tent-pegging by the sowars, also a Victoria Cross competition, and another in which two mounted men engaged in an effort to drag each other off their horses.

A mass of "the people" were seated on the

ground watching the sports, but the Indian "gentlemen" were allowed to take their seats in the tent from which the English visitors watched the sports. From time to time they left their seats and walked about to get a nearer view of the sports. As I watched the Political Agent moving about among them chatting with first one and then another, I thought how excellent his manner was, how popular he seemed, how pleased were those whom he noticed; and I felt how much the popularity of the English Government depends on the manner in which its representatives fill high positions. My friend was certainly the right man in the right place. Of this I heard several instances from time to time. One that struck me most was his masterly handling of a recalcitrant chief, who had refused to give a piece of land required for a rifle-range, or some such purpose, in his State. When the difficulty was mentioned to the P.A. he sent for the chief in question and said: "My friend, I am surprised that a man so intelligent, so well educated, and, as we believe, loyal as you are, should refuse a gift which you can well afford, which is in value nothing to one so well off as you are. You should reflect that you have the honour to be

a unit of the great British Empire,¹ and you should act up to your position as such, recognise your responsibilities, and be glad to do your share in assisting in works of public utility, designed to benefit the country in general. You ought to think it an honour to have your assistance counted on." The chief at once capitulated. He burst into tears, saying: "I would have given it before, had not your predecessor insulted me and said he would horsewhip me if I did not do so."

The gift was appreciated, the giver was honoured. He was able to enjoy the title of Knight Commander of the Indian Empire, and the appellation "Sir Krishna Rao."

Indian gentlemen do thoroughly enjoy a title. It is not in their eyes valueless, or an empty honour; it gives precedence, and this, in their opinion, is worth more than money.

To return to the sports. The prizes were distributed by the Political Agent's wife; she too was very popular. I noticed how those Indian gentlemen who could speak English watched for an opportunity to approach her, and

¹ Since this was written the upper classes of the Indian people have grasped this idea, and an address presented to the Viceroy after the visit of King George, 1912, was a remarkable outcome of the Imperial spirit which I shall refer to in a later chapter.

with what diffidence they addressed her, for a little chat with the Burra Mem Sahib was a greatly prized privilege.

During the afternoon I had been introduced to a Persian gentleman, who wore a long, black coat and a red fez. He had come to take the post of professor of the Persian language at a neighbouring college. He told me he had come from the interior of Persia, where there were no railways, and that he had had to travel on horseback, several days' journey, over rough paths and through districts infested by brigands, before he could reach steamer or train to take him to Bombay.

I remarked that I supposed everything was novel to him, and that in his home he had heard little of what went on in the world.

He replied: "You are mistaken. We heard everything that goes on. We got the *Daily Mail*!"

In the evening there were illuminations after a banquet. The Chief came in to dessert. His health was drunk, and he thanked us for honouring him with our presence, on the most important day of his life. Next morning we made an early start for the return journey.

We returned by the way we came to my

friend's charming Residency, where I am to spend Christmas.

Colonel W. always retires to his office after breakfast, attends to his correspondence, and interviews people who come to consult him. His duties seem multifarious. By the by, perhaps you do not know what a Political Agent is. Each Presidency is divided into several Agencies, and each Agent is responsible to the Governor of the Presidency for the good government of the States ruled by Indian princes which are in his Agency. My host, Colonel W., has only one large, important State in his Agency, but a number of smaller ones. One or two of the chiefs are minors, and he is responsible for their education and the administration of their States during their minority. Nor can a marriage be arranged for a chief without his—the Political Agent's—consent.

Yesterday I went into the drawing-room and found Mrs. W. in conversation with a richly dressed Indian lady by whose side stood a pretty boy about ten years old, dressed in a tweed coat and trousers, and an embroidered velvet turban hat. After the visitors had taken their departure, I remarked on the boy's good looks.

"It was a girl," remarked Mrs. W. "The

parents wish to arrange a marriage between her and the little Chief of Dhol, who lives here with his tutor, and brought her 'on approval' to show my husband, and to obtain his consent. Girls are often dressed as boys till they attain maturity, the idea being that, their sex not being apparent, they will not attract attention when travelling, or in public places."

Next day was Christmas Eve. We went to help decorate the English church in the camp, and afterwards witnessed a performance of tableaux vivants, representing scenes from the Gospel story, by the children at the Mission School, ending up with a Christmas-tree, for which my friend had supplied the gifts.

Very early on Christmas morning the boys from the Mission School aroused us with the old hymn :

"Christians, awake, salute the happy morn,
Whereon the Saviour of the world was born."

While we were drinking our morning tea, a camel-sowar from the Palace appeared, bringing Christmas cards from the Maharajah to each inmate of the Residency, including myself. Then there was the service in church to attend, after which the station forgathered

in the churchyard and exchanged the good wishes of the season.

During the day many trays of fruit and flowers, sometimes accompanied by a plum-cake, appeared at the Residency, for the natives knew it was our Burra Din (great day) and sent their compliments.

Throughout India Good Friday and the great Christian festivals, Christmas and Easter, are claimed as holidays by the non-Christian people, as well as by the English.

On Boxing Day all the English residents in the station were to be entertained at dinner at the Residency, and after dinner Mrs. W.'s two little girls, and some friends of their own age, were to amuse the company by acting some charades, for which they showed much aptitude. A curtain had been rigged up in the Durbar Hall, and thither we all repaired after dinner, the gentlemen having been told not to linger too long over the wine. The audience were seated, but still the curtain was not raised, but behind it an altercation between the actors could be heard. Presently a little head appeared at the side of the curtain, and Mrs. W.'s eldest girl said: "Mummy, you won't mind if one of the words is a *rude* word, will you?" Being

reassured on that point, the curtain was drawn and the actors appeared seated at table. It was a luncheon party. The eldest girl, dressed as a man, grumbled at every dish that was handed to him, exclaiming at last: "We have had nothing fit to eat since this damn cook has been in the house!"

Colonel W. was somewhat a valetudinarian, and his wife always said that anxiety about the meals was turning her hair grey. The little girl who represented the grumbler on the stage had, unconsciously perhaps, imitated her father's tone and manner of speaking, and none laughed louder than he did, though perhaps he felt rather sheepish when it was brought home to him that he was teaching "rude" words to his little daughters.

"Damage" was the word they were representing.

Ap[ro]pos of food it is always supposed that English people live very luxuriously in India. In the Presidency towns the markets are well supplied, but in country districts the staple food is goat-mutton, and if there are asparagus and peas, they are generally tinned, as are the peaches and plums—as well as the fish.

During the week my hostess drove me up

to the hill station where there is a place for the Political Agent to reside in during the hot weather. It was a sixteen-mile drive, and we had to change horses halfway, for the last part is a very steep ascent by a road winding round and round the hill. We had lovely peeps at the valleys beneath, and when we arrived at the Residency a fine view over a wide expanse of country. The house was built into the side of the hill; on one side there was a sheer precipice of thousands of feet. The nucleus of the building had been an old Mohammedan tomb in Aurangzeb's time, modern rooms had been added; but the old part used as a dining-room was intact and had a vaulted roof. The old fort on the hill-top, with its beautifully carved gateways, was very interesting. Roads had been made, and quite a long drive winding around could be taken without leaving the crown of the hill.

I was sorry we were only to stay one night, but we had to descend next day to be present at the New Year's Day parade, after which my friends would start on their cold-weather tour, and would be camping out in the remoter districts of the Agency, and I was to bid them good-bye and go north again.

I knew I should not meet my hostess, Mrs. W., again for some years, for she was approaching that sad hour in the life of the Englishwoman in India, when she must choose between husband and children. The little girls were getting too old to remain in India, there was no grandmother or aunt to look after them in England, so my friend decided that it was her duty to take the children there and stay with them, leaving her husband alone.

An Englishman's life in India has been described as that of a man who works hard to maintain a wife and children whom he seldom sees.

That is too often the case.

I had arranged while down in the south to pay a visit to a friend at Bangalore in the Madras Presidency before returning to Hariana. This entailed a long wait at a junction on the first night of the journey. Shall I ever forget that night in the waiting-room? It looked clean, and I placed some pillows on the cane couch, and lay down. I did not stay there long; unseen legions desired to make a meal of me. Rest was impossible, and when I looked at myself in the glass while tying a scarf over my head before going outside, I noticed that my

face was covered with bites and the white lumps that follow. I went out, and spent the night walking up and down the platform, occasionally resting myself by sitting for a while on a heap of stones. The train I was waiting for came along soon after dawn, and I relieved my sufferings by a plentiful application of ammonia when I found myself alone in the compartment.

CHAPTER VIII

A COSMOPOLITAN DINNER-PARTY—AN AFGHAN PRINCESS—
AN INDIAN BLONDEL

I GREATLY enjoyed my visit to the Madras Presidency, which is so thoroughly the India of one's imagination, and the tales of one's childhood, "Little Henry and his Bearer," etc. There one finds the palm-trees, the oppressive heat, and the really black faces under the white turbans, for the natives of the Madras Presidency are many shades darker than those of the Bombay Presidency or Northern India.

Although Bangalore is in the Native State of Mysore, it is a very large English military station, and kept in apple-pie order. The Maharajah's Palace in its parklike grounds is a reproduction of Balmoral, as far as the outside goes, but the interior is very different. In one room the furniture—tables, chairs, etc.—is of embossed glass; another room is used as a school for the children of the Palace servants

—quite an army. I noticed that the writing on the blackboard was in Canarese, the language of the Carnatic, as the district which includes the State of Mysore is called. The mother of the reigning Maharajah is a grand woman ; I have alluded to her regency in a previous letter.

More interesting than Bangalore is the old city of Mysore, about two hours' train journey from Bangalore. There you find old winding streets, temples, and tombs in cypress groves, and many typical Indian sights, and the Maharajah's new palace might outshine that of Solomon. During the Maharajah's minority the old palace was destroyed by fire, and as the revenues of the State are very large it was resolved to erect a new palace which should be second to none in India. During six years one thousand skilled artificers, "men cunning to work in wood and stone," brought from all parts of the world, were employed on it. There are floors of beautiful mosaic, doors of solid silver, embossed and chased, others of exquisitely carved ivory, some of ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl, ceilings painted and gilded. Though living amidst all this splendour the Maharajah's own apartments are small and plainly furnished. The Indian gentleman is generally simple in his

own personal mode of life, and I have seen the bedroom of the wife of a great prince in which there was nothing but a mattress and coverlet spread on the floor; on this she slept in preference to a bedstead.

After all, the simple life is true freedom; to want very little and not to be the slave of our own needs, this is true liberty.

The ruling house of Mysore are loyal adherents of the British Raj. When the English army overthrew the Mohammedan power in the Carnatic and vanquished Hyder Ali and his son, Tipoo Sultan, who had usurped the throne of Mysore, they decided to give the State back to the rightful heirs, the Hindu family who had been ousted by the Persian soldier of fortune, Hyder Ali, who began life in the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The old royal family were living in poverty and seclusion when sought out by the English Government, who selected the personage nearest of kin to the last Hindu ruler, who they considered had most right to the succession, and declared him Maharajah of Mysore. The present rulers of Mysore do not forget what they owe to the English.

We visited Seringapatam, not far from Mysore, where Tipoo Sultan made his last stand, and

met his death fighting in the breaches. The siege of Seringapatam was one of the most thrilling incidents in the history of the English conquest of India. As an instance of the estimation in which women were held by the Mohammedan world at that date, a letter of Tipoo Sultan may be quoted. It was written when he found it necessary to leave Mysore and go to the front. In it he gives the following order : " Send on the women, and the rest of *the rubbish* by easy stages, as opportunity arises." The Maharanee of Mysore has certainly proved that she is not " rubbish."

After leaving Mysore I went to stay at Satara in the Bombay Presidency. I do not think there is a more picturesque little station than Satara to be found in the Presidency. It lies in a hollow, well sheltered by the Western Ghats (Vindhyia Mountains), whose rugged peaks in varied forms stand sharply defined against the sky. On one side of the town are the ruins of the old fort on the hillside. From the summit one obtains a splendid view over the surrounding country, fertile plains dotted with villages and intersected by four winding streams, which have their source in Mahableshwar, the highest part of the Ghats, a plateau where are the summer quarters of the

Bombay Government. Mahableshwar, the native name for the place, is a Marathi word meaning "great strength of God," which I suppose the natives see manifested in these mountain fastnesses.

Satara consists of the old city, and the camp, where the bungalows of the English officials are situated in prettily laid-out gardens, in all of which are planted flame-of-the-forest trees.¹ When they are in full bloom, just before the rain, Satara looks its best. Trains were inconvenient, and I arrived there after midnight and before dawn, after a seven-mile drive from the station. By some mistake the tongas ordered to meet me were not there, and my manservant foolishly took, without inspection, the first two tongas that were offered from those waiting in the station-yard. My luggage was placed on one, and I climbed into the other. It was a bad specimen of its kind, and the ponies looked half starved ; however, to my surprise, they started off at full gallop and kept up the pace all the way, so that the rickety vehicle swayed from side to side, and I had to clutch hold of the side-rail in order to avoid being jerked out of my seat, especially when the ponies shied, as they frequently did, at some shadow

¹ A tree of the acacia tribe, bearing brilliant red flowers.

on the road, when the moonlight shone fitfully through the branches of the trees that over-arched the road. When we reached Satara the tongawala (driver) did not know which house to take me to. It turned out that he was accustomed to ply between the station and the city, and consequently did not know the camp, being, like all Indians of his class, quite ignorant of every place and thing outside his own daily beat. So he drove up to first one and then another bungalow, and roused the sleeping servants, only to be told that this was not the house wanted. We disturbed three households in this manner before reaching my destination. There a servant awaited me, and conducted me through a silent house to my sleeping-apartment, for it so often happens in India that guests arrive in the middle of the night or the small hours of the morning, that a host or hostess will not stay up to receive them, but will welcome them at breakfast later on.

The Resident, at whose house I was to stay, is one of the best type of English officials, springing from a family who have served in India for several generations. He had been born in Satara, and now held the important position which his father had filled before him. He and his wife were recognised by the in-

habitants as true friends of the Indian people. His wife was one of the few English ladies I have met (other than missionaries) who had tried to learn the difficult Marathi language, spoken in this district.

In the afternoon of the first day of my visit, she (Mrs. A.) asked me to accompany her to a meeting of the Indian Ladies' Club, at which she was expected. I was only too pleased to add to my experience of intercourse with the women of India, and we drove through the busy streets of the old city, where one sees the coppersmith and other craftsmen carrying on their work, and the buyers of cloth and eatables bargaining with the tradesmen in the shops with fronts open to the street, until we came to the old palace. It is a rambling, four-sided building, erected round the four sides of a large, open courtyard. The walls were covered with gaudy and grotesque pictures of the Hindu mythology.

There is now no Rajah of Satara. The last Rajah had no son, and, in accordance with Government policy of that date, was not allowed the privilege of adopting one, so the State lapsed to the English Government, and the palace is used for all sorts of public purposes—law-courts, schools, etc. We had to climb a very narrow

winding staircase till we arrived at a large room, generally used as a girls' school, but it was after school hours, the scholars had departed, and the members of the Ladies' Club were awaiting us—about two dozen Indian ladies of all ages, who all stood up to welcome my friend. I was introduced, and then the president, Miss Joshi, a well-educated Brahmin lady, daughter of a retired Government civil servant, rose and proceeded to read the agenda for the day, and to welcome two newly elected members, and comment on the papers that had been read at the last meeting. This finished, the president, who had prepared a paper for the day's séance, commenced to read it aloud. The subject was "The difference between the women of the East and the West," and the authoress showed a very clear perception of the weak and strong points of each. When she finished, she invited the audience to comment on her paper, but all were too shy to do so. My friend, Mrs. A., made a few complimentary remarks, and then asked if any one else had prepared a paper to read. After much hesitation one lady was led to confess that she had written an account of a visit to Pandharpur. She needed much encouragement before she could be induced to begin to read it, and when

she did start, she broke down after a few minutes, said she could not read any more, and sat down overwhelmed with confusion.

The president then took the paper from her, and finished reading it aloud. At the conclusion the authoress received much praise for her composition, and was exhorted to try again at the next meeting.

The subjects for discussion at the next meeting were then proposed. Mrs. A. and myself were garlanded and scented. Mrs. A. went round and addressed a few friendly words to each lady present, and then we took our departure.

Oh, the scent of that attar, and of the garlands ! How it comes back to me as I write. I never see or smell a tuberose without the memory of some Indian party or ceremony coming to my mind.

In the evening there was a pleasant dinner-party at the Residency, when guests from all parts of the world sat shoulder to shoulder. The Judge had come from Sind, the Chaplain was not long out from London, the young soldier¹ who took me in to dinner had come from Hong-Kong, the one opposite from Ireland, another from Aden, and a fourth from Cape

¹ A musketry class is held in Satara, to which young soldiers are sent from all parts.

Town, while an older official who sat on my right hand had just come from Nepaul, which is looked on as outside the borders of civilised India. He told me how surprised he was when, after much travelling through wild country, he arrived at Katimandhu (the capital of Nepaul) to find the English Political Agent's wife holding an "At Home," the band playing, and tennis, badminton, and afternoon tea in full swing. "I was so disappointed," he said, "I did think I should escape all that in Nepaul."

All travellers who enter Nepaul are severely scrutinised and have to provide themselves with a passport, on which, among other details, is stated whether they are married or single.

The passport of a lady who was going to stay at the Residency described her as a "spinster." This greatly puzzled the Nepaulese authorities. Was she some kind of missionary? They begged the Resident to enlighten them.

At the Satara dinner-party the guests from all quarters gathered round the hospitable board, perhaps never to meet again, fraternised, and chatted gaily—

"Ships that pass in the night
And hail each other in passing."

So much society in India is like that.

There is good sport to be had in the hills around Satara. Our host had had *kubber* (information) that panthers were in the immediate neighbourhood, and some of the guests were making arrangements to start in pursuit next day.

One lady was going with her husband. She was a noted shot and already had a goodly number of heads to her credit. Once I was persuaded to join a shooting party, but I resolved never to repeat the experience—my feelings of pity for the wretched "kill" spoilt my pleasure. A little platform is erected on the branches of a tree, and there two guns station themselves at night. Under the tree a goat (the "kill") has been tethered to tempt the panther or tiger who is known to be lurking somewhere near. The poor goat's instinct warns him of approaching doom, he bleats pitifully, and sometimes his agony lasts for hours, if the panther is not near enough to scent a "kill."

It would be less cruel to put a dead goat there, but I believe the poor victim's bleatings are necessary to attract the attention of the prowling beast of prey.

I could only spare a few days for my visit to Satara, but my hostess would not let me go without taking me to visit a lady who is quite

184 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

the local celebrity, a high-born Afghan lady, related to the Amir of Afghanistan. Her life had been quite a romance, and her marriage to an English officer one of the few inter-racial unions that have proved a success. Exactly how she, as a very young girl, made the acquaintance of the Englishman I did not make out, but it must have been clandestinely, and at the risk of her life. He loved, but he had to ride away—that is, to move on with his regiment to another station. Probably to him the love affair was regarded as a passing episode; to her it meant her whole life and soul. He had not reckoned with the passionate Eastern nature which could endure death rather than absence from the beloved one, nor the strength of will and tenacity of purpose which enabled this young girl and a faithful maid-servant, having little or no money, to brave the hardships and difficulties of a long journey made on foot for the greater part of the way from Afghanistan to Kurachi in the Bombay Presidency. It was fifty years ago, and in those days there were no railways or facilities for travel. However, eventually they arrived safely at Kurachi (where the English officer was stationed), and, footsore, weary, travel-stained, with clothing almost in rags, presented

themselves at his bungalow. At first he did not recognise the child, whom he had last seen richly dressed, and bejewelled, in surroundings befitting her birth and rank. Whether he was altogether pleased at her arrival I am not prepared to say, but he behaved honourably, treated her as his ward, had her well cared for, and educated. To have sent her back to her home would have been sending her to certain death. Eventually, when she had grown up into a charming young lady, he (who was considerably her elder) fell in love with her over again and married her. He took her to England, where she was received in good society and met many celebrities, who petted and made much of her, indeed in her day she must have been something of a lioness. She was a good housekeeper and made her husband's home very comfortable, and always adored him. He died after they returned to India, leaving her quite a rich woman. When I made her acquaintance she was old and blind, but not lonely. The Resident's wife never failed in her weekly visit, other ladies in the station were no less attentive, and she was quite happy when she had a listener to whom she could talk of old days, of Lord Palmerston, and King Louis Philippe and other celebrities

of the Victorian era, to whom she had been introduced in London.

Every evening she went for a drive in her comfortable landau, and, feeling that I was a sympathetic listener and interested in her reminiscences, she asked me to accompany her one evening. I assented and, when we had driven a few miles out, she called a halt. It is customary in the evening drive (which is a regular item in the day's programme when living in India) to draw up on any high ground, enjoy the air, rest the horses, and perhaps stroll about a little before returning home. When the carriage halted, my companion opened a little red velvet bag that she was holding, drew out an envelope and handed it to me.

I found it contained a little brochure, entitled "My Indian Wife," a little account of their romance written by her late husband for private circulation.

She asked me to read it aloud to her. I complied, and she listened with breathless attention to a story of which she must have known every word by heart. The writer praised her to the skies, and pride and profound satisfaction were visible on her countenance as I read aloud her husband's eulogy.

For her, the past lived again; she began to talk, to explain and enlarge on the written story. Time passed. I did not like to interrupt her. It grew dark. The groom lighted the carriage-lamps and asked leave to start back. She did not heed him, but continued her flow of reminiscences, which evidently gave her so much pleasure that I had not the heart to break in on them. At last the coachman could bear it no longer, he came to the side of the carriage, and in peremptory tones said it was time to go home.

“Yes, yes!” she said impatiently. The horses’ heads were turned, her chain of thought was broken, and she came back regretfully to the present day, saying: “I am afraid I shall have made you late for the Residency dinner.”

I assured her that did not matter, and told her how touched and interested I had been in her story; she was pleased at my sympathy, and we parted with mutual regret, when she dropped me at the gate of the Residency.

There are many interesting corners to be discovered in Satara: the old palace fishponds in the picturesque garden, and inside the palace the great chest from which the custodian will take the Coat of Shivaji, the great Mahratta

Chieftain, to show you, also the iron claws which he concealed in his hands before bestowing the treacherous embrace which killed his Mohammedan adversary, Abdul Aziz—the steel hooks were attached to two rings fitting the fingers and could be concealed in the hand.

Although the custodian assured us that these were the claws actually used by Shivaji, I think this is not true, for in the "Life of Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay," the following letter written by Elphinstone himself is quoted. The date is November 1826.

"The Rajah of Satara is the most civilised Mahratta I ever met with, has his country in excellent order, and does everything to his roads and aqueducts in a style that would do credit to a European. I was more struck with his private sitting-room than anything I saw at Satara. It contains a single table covered with green velvet, at which the descendant of Shivaji sits in a chair and writes letters, as well as a journal of his transactions, with his own hand. He has his civil and criminal registers, his minutes of revenue, and balances of last quarter at his fingers' ends, and always sits in the Courts of

Justice, and conducts his business with the utmost regularity. I went out hunting with him one day, when a gentleman had a bad fall and lay for dead just in front of me. When I got off, I found a horseman had dismounted and was supporting his head, and to my surprise it was the Rajah, who had let his horse go and run to his assistance. The Rajah gave me an entertainment in the evening. He is about twenty-five, not handsome, but good-humoured-looking. His mother is a fine old lady, who has been handsome and still has fine eyes. She has good manners and, it is said, good abilities. Their gratitude to the British Government is unfeigned. At parting, the Rajah gave me the identical *baghnakh* (tiger's claws) with which Shivaji stabbed the Moghul general in a treacherous embrace, and afterwards destroyed his army. They are formidable steel hooks, very sharp, and attached to two rings fitting the fingers, and lie concealed in the inside of the hand."

The biographer adds that these weapons are now in the possession of Sir Mountstuart E. Grant-Duff, Elphinstone's godson. Before the last Maratha war the Rajahs of Satara had dwelt in obscurity, as *rois fainéants*, for several generations, leaving authority and the cares of

government to successive Peshwas. A Peshwa was a Prime Minister or Mayor of the Palace. The Peshwas, whose dignity was hereditary, fixed their seat of Government at Poona, and their power spread throughout South-West India, but the Rajahs of Satara, the lineal heirs of Shivaji the founder of the Maratha Empire, were the fountain-head from which the Peshwas derived their power, and when the last Peshwa, Bajirao, entered into a conflict with the English, and forfeited his power and throne at Poona, and fled before the English troops, he dragged the Rajah of Satara with him backwards and forwards throughout the Deccan and to one fort and the other of the Western Ghauts (the hills around Satara), the last strongholds of the Maratha power. The hill-forts held out for a long time, but fell one by one, and in 1818 the British flag was hoisted on the fort at Satara. The Peshwa was pensioned and banished to North India, and is best remembered by Englishmen as the adoptive father of Nana Sahib, the perpetrator of the Cawnpore massacres. The refusal of the British Government to continue the Peshwa's pension to this adopted son is looked upon as one of the causes that led up to the Indian Mutiny.

When the Peshwa was banished, his domains were declared British territory, but a small principality was set apart for the Rajah of Satara ; it had an area of five thousand square miles and a population of one million souls.

The young prince requited the good-will shown to him, and under the tutorship of an excellent Resident became a pattern ruler. But after his death Satara lapsed to the English Government, owing to Lord Dalhousie's policy of denying to Native rulers the privilege of adoption failing direct heirs. This highly valued privilege has now been restored, which has conduced greatly to make the Native princes content and satisfied under British rule.

The line of Shivaji is now represented by the Maharajah of Kolhapur.

The hills around Satara are of the trap formation, with the singularly scarped forms peculiar to that style of mountain. Under the Mahratta Government many of them were crowned by hill-forts, for which their form remarkably qualifies them. These sky-threatening fortresses were found in the late war to fall far more easily than could be expected before the British and Sepoy troops, for the steepest and most rugged mountains, on account of the ravines

with which they abound, can be approached by an attacking force under cover, so they were allowed to fall into ruins and were abandoned by the English when the Mahratta war came to an end, and the Mahratta power was overthrown.

Among the natives many legends and stories are current of the adventures of their forefathers among these hill-forts ; many have been kept in the popular mind by ballads, repeated from father to son.

The exploits of Trimbukjee, a favourite Minister of the Peshwa, were very exciting. He was particularly obnoxious to the British, who seized him and kept him captive in the prison at Thana. While he was there a common-looking Mahratta groom, with a good character in his hand, came to offer his services to the commanding officer. . He was taken on, and the stable in which his horse was kept was near the window of Trimbukjee's prison. Nothing out of the common was observable in this groom, except a more than usual attention to his horse, and a habit while currying and cleaning him of singing verses of Mahratta songs, all apparently relating to his profession. Suddenly Trimbukjee disappeared so did the groom, on which it was

recollected that his singing had frequently been verses like the following :

“ Behind the bush the bowmen hide
The horse beneath the tree ;
Where shall I find a knight will ride
The jungle path with me ?
There are five-and-fifty coursers then
And four-and-fifty men ;
When the fifty-fifth shall mount his steed
The Dekan thrives again.”

The incident reminds one of Blondel and Cœur de Lion, and the spirited translation of the verses, which has quite the ring of a Scotch border ballad, was made by Bishop Heber, whose poetical gifts are so well known.

CHAPTER IX

AMONG THE MISSIONARIES—A LADY DOCTOR

Now that I have lived several years in India, visited such widely different parts of it, and mixed with all castes and creeds, I have quite revised some of the preconceived notions I brought with me. One of these relates to the missionaries, and I must tell you how much impressed I have been by finding how universally respected the missionaries in general are by all classes of the Indian people.

This is quite the reverse of what people in England who have not lived in India believe to be the case. In England, one very frequently hears it said: "I never subscribe to missions. Missionaries cause trouble wherever they go."

Not long after I arrived in India I heard an English official speak against missionaries, and was surprised to hear a Brahmin gentleman take up their defence, saying: "They do more good than any one else. They work very hard, and not for

their own profit. They never enrich themselves. They often die young, and always die poor."

Then turning to me he added: "You may be surprised to hear it, but though few educated Hindus become Christians, they have a great respect for missionaries."¹

I replied: "I am glad to hear it, and I see that Christian philanthropy is appreciated. In India it cannot be said: 'First the missionary, then the gunboat.' It is rather: 'First the missionary, then the schools and hospitals.'"

Many English people will say when speaking of the Indian people: "Our religion is good for us, and their religion for them."

I heard an English lady who had expressed this opinion say soon afterwards in reference to servants: "Oh! any one of them would murder us for eight annas [sixpence]."

"And yet," I rejoined, "you say that a religion which would not restrain them from doing that is good enough for them, and they do not need to be taught better!"

I was reminded of Voltaire, who would not allow his atheist companions to talk against

¹ Since this was written, Professor Rudra, a Hindu, defended missionaries at a Convention in Oxford, October 1912, when Mrs. Flora Annie Steele expressed disapproval of their methods.

religion while at a dinner-table. "Wait till the servants have gone out of the room," he said. "It is only their religion that keeps them from murdering us in our beds to-night, and making off with the money and valuables."

One has only to talk with Indian people, or with missionaries or others who know them well, to find out that Hinduism is (certainly among the uneducated) chiefly a matter of ceremonies, and no check on conduct.

If you hear people saying that Hindus should be let alone and do not need to be taught, or to have their moral standard raised, pray tell them the following true story. It was told me by the wife of the Judge who tried the case.

A childless wife, fearing that, if she bore him no children, her husband would take a second wife (which the Hindu religion allows), went to a holy man or priest, an ascetic, to ask his advice as to what she could do to make the gods propitious.

The holy man told her to kill a little girl, under ten years of age, take out her liver, fry it and eat it, and it would have the desired effect; she would have a son.

The woman obeyed these instructions.

The murdered child's corpse she hid under a

stack of corn-stalks near the hut; the odour of the decomposing body attracted attention, the crime was discovered, and the woman brought to justice. The Judge sentenced her to be hanged. He was blamed for condemning her to the supreme penalty. It was said the woman was so grossly ignorant that she did not understand how foul a crime she had committed. The Judge refused to commute the sentence, for he said: "The superstition which led to the crime is widespread. Not long ago another woman was sentenced to penal servitude for a similar crime, and I was told the woman I have lately condemned showed no fear when arrested, saying: 'At worst, the Judge Sahib will only send me across the *kala panc*'—i.e. send her across the sea to the penal settlement in the Andaman Islands. Only when it becomes known that death is the penalty will such crimes cease."

His decision was appealed against, but the High Court upheld it, seeing the force of his argument. The sentence of death was carried out.

The "holy man" who advised the crime was perhaps the worst offender. But to catch him was an impossibility. He would be hundreds of miles away, or adopt fifty different disguises.

All classes of natives would shelter him ; they would be afraid of offending him, lest they might draw his curse upon them.

Was he not a holy man ?

I have seen natives of India of respectable standing throw themselves at the feet of such a one, and ask his blessing, though he was very drunk at the time, and known to be a debauchee.

“ In what did his holiness consist ? ” you may ask.

Perhaps he did not live in a house, and abstained from some kinds of food, or could recite long portions of the Vedas.

He certainly did no work, nor did he clothe himself decently.

The holy men among the missionaries are a very different type. Their self-denial is shown in teaching the ignorant, tending the leper, feeding the famine-stricken, or working in many other ways for the good of others, working strenuously on what is only just a living wage, and some of them at their own cost. Many of them are men whose abilities would have won them wealth and distinction in any profession they had chosen to enter, such as Dr. Pennell, the C.M.S. missionary at Bannu, on the northern frontier, who was said to be worth a regiment of soldiers to

the Government as a peacemaker, on account of his influence with the turbulent frontier tribes to whom he devoted his life.

Then there are the two Mission doctors in Cashmere, the Neves, and the C.M.S. doctor at Quetta, who are widely known and revered ; and Dr. Wanless, of the American Presbyterian Mission at Miraj, who is a power in the land, and whose fame as a surgeon has spread throughout India. He possesses the finest and best equipped operating-room in the Presidency, the gift of a gentleman of Philadelphia, who says it is the best investment he ever made. Had Dr. Wanless done nothing else, it would have been an achievement to be proud of, to have performed (as he has during his stay at Miraj) two thousand successful operations for cataract, and given sight to two thousand people.

It must, however, be said that though medical missionaries are greatly respected, and hundreds of thousands of natives of India take advantage of their skill, very few of the natives are led to accept Christianity. They may learn to respect it, but for the most part they say : " Our religion for us, yours for you." Many high-class Hindus like their wives to be visited by missionary ladies, and say : " They will learn nothing but what is

good from you." But should one of the Hindu ladies become interested in Christian teaching, or show any desire to become a Christian, an uproar would ensue.

Hindus want the fruit without the root—Christian virtue without Christ.

Yet when one thinks of the penalties incurred by a high-caste native of India who forsakes the religion of his race, there is perhaps no reason to wonder that so few accept Christianity. The English Government has been so anxious to be fair to all denominations, to show no preference to Christians, that it has perhaps allowed the scale to dip a little on the other side. One who becomes a Christian is first an outcast from the Hindu community, and, second, cannot inherit his share of the family property. This last seems an injustice. It needs very strong religious convictions to enable a man or woman to cast themselves off from family ties, which are very binding among Hindus, and to give up his means of living. It will be long before he feels one with the English Christian community; there can only be superficial intercourse between them. Amongst the natives of India, rich and poor, *if of the same caste*, are, to a certain degree, equal. When Hindus of any class become Christians they

think they have become of the same *caste* as the English, and consider themselves on an equality with the English. This is really the root of the complaints against native Christian servants, and the source of the advertisements frequently seen, ending "No Christians need apply."

Christian servants are often too familiar in their manner. They think: "We have been baptized. Now we are the same caste as the Sahibs."

The greater number of Indian natives who form the native Christian community are of the lowest classes, Out-castes (people of no caste), and have had everything to gain and nothing to lose by becoming Christians.

In spite of the defects of Christian servants, and failure of some native Christians to act up to the standard of Christian conduct, the efforts of Christian missionaries are beginning to meet with recognition from Government. Indeed it would be hardly possible to overlook their devoted services in saving life in times of plague and famine, nor their important medical and educational work. Lord Curzon was the first Viceroy to accord public recognition to the services of missionaries, and to include a

missionary in the list of recipients of Birthday Honours.

Now almost every year among the recipients of the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal one sees the name of Miss Jones or the Rev. Brown, or Dr. Robinson, of such and such a missionary society on the list, perhaps between the names of a general and a distinguished civil servant.

This is as it should be.

Missionaries in India were the pioneers of education. Many Indian gentlemen now holding high positions had their first chance in a Mission School. The splendid educational work now being carried on by Mr. Tyndal Biscoe at Shrinagar in Cashmere must turn out good citizens for the State. His aim is not to cram boys for examinations, but to build up fine characters, and many novel methods are adopted for attaining his ends. The ideas of Indian boys are revolutionised. To an Indian it is a sign of good birth and position not to lift a finger to help himself, but to be waited on hand and foot. The Shrinagar boys are taught not only to help themselves, but to help others—that to serve is a high privilege. As an instance of this, I may mention that Shrinagar stands on a beautiful lake, and on certain days in the week the

schoolboys take convalescents from the hospital out for a row. In many ways Mr. Tyndal Biscoe anticipated the boy-scout movement.

The work that lady doctors are doing throughout India is widely appreciated. Dr. Bradley in Bombay, Dr. Müller in Delhi, Dr. Brown at Ludhiana (who is training native women to become nurses and dispensers), Dr. Bernard at Poona, Dr. McArthur at Ratnagiri, Dr. Livingstone at Bangalore, are a few ladies whose names come to my mind as devoted and successful workers.

I must now tell you of an interesting visit that I paid to a lady doctor attached to a mission in the Bombay Presidency, Dr. Hilda Keane. I met her at the house of a mutual friend, and, seeing that I was interested in her work, she invited me to pay her a visit. She lived in a charming bungalow not far from the hospital for women and children which was under her care. We repaired thither every morning at eight o'clock in a bullock-dhummie. The driver always upheld his mistress's prestige and would never give way on the narrow road to any other vehicle.

"Don't you see it is the Doctor Miss Sahib?" he would shout. And then perhaps a loaded

154 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

wagon would have to go down a steep bank into a ditch to make way for us. How these overloaded country carts manage under these circumstances to keep their equilibrium as they do, and contrive not to precipitate occupants and cargo into the ditch, with cart on top, is a miracle that one sees performed daily in India.

On the first morning of my visit when we arrived at the hospital a crowd of out-patients were waiting for the doctor, who, however, had first to go round the wards, and inspect the in-patients. Some had undergone serious operations, others had slighter ailments; one little girl with her thigh done up in plaster-of-Paris seemed very happy playing with a doll. All were eager to claim the doctor's attention, and all wanted to know how soon they would be able to go home—who was to cook the husband's dinner, etc.?

One of the difficulties experienced in dealing with these poor ignorant people is that they are not willing to stay long enough for a thorough cure to be effected. They look upon medicine as a kind of magic and think the doctor should make a few passes, recite a formula, and give them a bottle of medicine, after drinking which they expect to be quite well at once.

It is a common belief among ignorant natives that pain is caused by the sufferer being possessed by an evil spirit, and they are easily led away by professions of native quacks, of whose pretensions the following will give an idea.

Over the door of a native doctor in a crowded street in Bombay the following proclamation was affixed :

“ I most humbly beg to inform the public that if anybody might be suffering from demon, magic, or fury, or any sort of patient who cannot be cured by any sort of medical treatment, that they should attend at my house in Abdul Rahman Street. All the patients will be cure by pronouncing some words, blowing upon water, spitting and amulet, by the grace of the Almighty Creator.”

Another quack advertised in a native paper :

“ By grace of the Almighty Creator, I can cure any disease whatever without medicine. The external disease can be cure in a few minutes ; internal ones, of course, require one day per year. Any disease that cannot be cure by English doctor will be cure by me in uttering one word only. This power I got from Fakir. Captious and mischievous people will not be allowed in my dispensary. Jokers will certainly

be given in charge to police. God bless the King-Emperor in this world and the next."

How could an ordinary trained English practitioner hope to compete with such pretensions?

The ordinary process of hospital treatment must indeed seem tame and tedious by comparison with the miracles the advertisers claim to have the power of performing.

Even if patients consent to stay in hospital for an operation, they think they ought to be quite well the next day and able to walk home, perhaps a considerable distance, or drive in a jolting cart over a rough country track.

After the wards had been inspected, it was the turn of the out-patients, who had been sitting meanwhile under the shade of a splendid tamarind-tree. shepherded by a native Christian Biblewoman, who received them on arrival, gave each a number, written on a piece of tin, so that first-comers should go in first to the doctor. They were then, while waiting their turn, required to sit down and listen while the Biblewoman told a simple story from the Bible, or sang a Marathi hymn. Some made no pretence of listening, others were very attentive. The doctor had taken her seat in the out-patients'

hall, and as her bell tinkled, number one of the group under the tree hurried in, and others followed in due order.

Most of them were a sorry sight, and it was sad to think how many were suffering from preventible disease ; very many from the results of a vicious life, others from ill-usage by ignorant native midwives, many from diseases caused by dirt and neglect. The last was especially the case with the children, many of whom were blind, but need not have been if their eyes had been kept clean ; others had cataract which might easily have been removed. But no ! their mothers would not consent to leave them in hospital, and there would have been little chance of success had the operation been performed in one of their unventilated huts, amid foul air and surroundings, when the mother might be counted on to wipe the eyes with a dirty rag when the doctor was gone.

I sat beside the doctor as she received each out-patient, and felt she was a brave woman. Much self-control was needed in dealing with such ignorant prejudice as most of the women displayed, and much self-denial not to shrink from touching and coming to close quarters with patients so very filthy as the greater number were.

We did not get home to breakfast till twelve o'clock; after that meal we retired to rest and take a bath before appearing at afternoon tea at half-past three.

Hardly had we sat down to tea when the figure of a Mahratta woman, in a beautiful dark blue saree, with a red border, appeared on the verandah, salaaming (bowing and greeting) at the doorway.

"Some one to see the Doctor Miss Sahib," said the butler.

"Send her away. You know it is against orders for any one to come here after the doctor. Tell her to go to the hospital. I am due there in half an hour's time."

But oh! it was very particular. If only Madam Sahib would give a chit (written order) for the woman to take to the hospital. She had been there, but the compounder had refused to give what she had asked for without a chit.

And what was it she was in such a hurry to get? Was any one at her house desperately ill?

No. Only some friends had come in from a distant village to visit her, and she wished to give them a treat. If only Madam Sahib would give her a bottle of cod-liver-oil which is so delicious! She wanted her friends to taste it!

The woman had a consumptive daughter to whom it had been supplied, but if the whole family appreciated it, probably the poor girl herself did not get much of it.

The petitioner was told that cod-liver-oil was a very expensive medicine, and could only be given when really needed. However, she produced a rupee, which she had tied up in the corner of her handkerchief, and offered to pay for the oil. She was determined to give her visitors a treat, cost what it may. So the doctor laughed and gave her the bit, desiring the compounder to supply her.

My friend was to go out to a village twenty miles away the next day, and had promised to take me with her.

She is a very gallant little doctor, a slender little woman with fair hair and a bright complexion, looking even younger than she is. I think her appearance greatly astonishes the patients who see her for the first time, for they have heard of the formidable operations she has performed successfully in hospital, and are astonished that so frail-looking a young lady should possess so much knowledge, capacity, and resolution as are necessary to accomplish what she has done.

Our two tongas came to the door at 7 a.m.

The doctor and I got into the first, and the Biblewoman and the compounder with a large box of medicines and remedies into the second. It was a bright, delicious cold-weather morning, the air crisp and invigorating, and as we drove along between hedges wreathed in "morning glories" (convolvulus of a lovely shade of light blue) the doctor entertained me with accounts of her adventures when touring in the districts.

One day, just as she was drawing near a distant village, the tonga overturned, the box of medicines fell out, the bottles broke and the contents were spilled, so when the villagers came out they were disappointed to find the medicine in a pool on the ground ; nothing was saved but a few powders and a little ointment.

My gallant little friend has had many adventures and penetrated to remote villages where no doctor had been before, and no one had ever seen an Englishwoman.

At one village they were afraid to come out of their huts. In vain did the puttiwalla march through the streets crying: "Here is the gracious Doctor Madam Sahib. Does nobody want her medicine? Is no one ill in this village? Come out, ye senseless ones, and get the good medicine."

The doors remained closed. No one was ill in this salubrious village ! The doctor found out afterwards that her approach had been descried by the village priest, who chanced to be a bigoted and ill-disposed man, and he had forbidden the people to receive her.

As we drove along on the morning when I accompanied her, we soon had to leave the road and jolt along over cart-tracks across fields till we came to a river. This had to be forded. The water was fairly deep, up to the tops of the tonga-wheels ; just as we got half-way across, the harness broke, the horses went on to shore, and left us sitting in our tonga, mid-stream. There were many excited exclamations from tonga number two, which passed us. Our driver boarded number two, reached the river-bank, caught the horses, and he and the driver of number two rode them back to where we were stuck up, fastened them with bits of rope to our vehicle, and took us safely to land.

At the village not far from the river, the doctor was known. The patel's¹ wife was an old patient and greeted her warmly. Very soon a crowd of would-be patients gathered round the tongas, and the compounder had difficulty in

¹ Patel is the village headman.

keeping them at bay and making them wait their turn.

The compounder was a tall, handsome Mahratta girl, who had been educated at the Mission School, and trained to pass the requisite examinations to qualify for her work.

The Biblewoman assisted to keep order at first, and when the crowd around the doctor grew less, as each received their medicine and passed on, she gathered an audience around her at a little distance, to listen to her message.

One man kept shouting at her: "I have been ill ten years" (showing a dreadful sore in the calf of his leg). "If your doctor can cure me, I will believe in your God. If not, how is your God better than ours?"

His challenge was not accepted, the question was begged. He was told that the Doctor Madam Sahib only treated women and children, and that he must go to the neighbouring town to the civil-surgeon.

After treating the patients who came to her, the doctor was taken to several huts to visit bedridden invalids, and it was two o'clock before her work was done, and we could sit down to rest on the verandah of the patel's house and open our tea-basket. How refresh-

ing that tea was! How appetising those egg-sandwiches, followed by some delicious fruit, mangos, offered by the patel's wife.

The patel has great power in a village. In this case he was a well-to-do man with flocks and herds, and his wife possessed a great deal of jewellery, which she displayed to us with much pride and satisfaction. Having duly admired it, we took our departure. The tongawala thought it best to avoid recrossing the river, and took us home by a longer route. The tongas were hired vehicles (the doctor's bullock-dhummie could not go these long distances); when we re-entered the town, which was their home, the ponies wanted to take the turning that led to their own stables instead of taking us to the doctor's bungalow outside the town. So much jibbing went on, severe whippings followed by cajolements, many trips down by-streets before they could be induced to continue in the right direction.

I was tired when we got home; not so the doctor, though she had gone through a hard day's work, involving strain of mind as well as body. She told me that what worried and vexed her most was, that the people would not allow her to help them as much as she could have done. For

instance, in the villages visited there were a dozen children with cataract, which might easily have been removed, if only their parents would have consented to an operation. But no ! They preferred that the children should be blind for life.

Then each of the patients visited in the huts needed treatment that could only be carried out in hospital, but the women were not willing, or if they were willing to come, a relative objected, "How was she to get to the hospital?"

"I will take you in my tonga."

No, they could not overcome their dread of an unknown quantity, a hospital ; or perhaps no relative could be spared to accompany them and prepare their food, as is the custom in native hospitals.

However, the doctor felt she had done her best, and done a good day's work, though it was not yet over. After a bath and tea she went down to her hospital, where various matters detained her for two hours.

Her time was very fully occupied, her life a strenuous one. Never did she turn a deaf ear to an appeal for help, and not infrequently after a long day's work she was aroused in the middle of the night by people from a distant village come to summon her to attend an urgent case. She

seldom refused to go, but was always accompanied by a hospital nurse and the faithful old puttiwala, who, though he grumbled at having his night's rest disturbed, would never have allowed his mistress to go on such an expedition without his escort. I am glad to say my young friend's strenuous work and marked ability have won due recognition, and she now has a fine post, as doctor in charge of the fine, well-equipped hospital built at Delhi in memory of Queen Victoria, by a committee of Indian gentlemen, who wished to testify to their veneration of the Great Queen.

Although, as I have mentioned previously, in some quarters the English Government is blamed for having, in its anxiety to show no favouritism to any religion, tipped the scale against Christianity, yet this has probably worked out for good during the late "unrest" in India. No one associates Christianity in their minds with the Government, consequently Christian religion has not shared the unpopularity which has lately befallen the British Raj. Indeed at the place where I have just been paying a visit, a town noted for its disloyalty, where a plot to murder all the English residents had lately been discovered, it came to light that the only English

person whose life was to be spared was a missionary lady who had lived and laboured there for many years, and done much good in caring for lepers, establishing schools, etc. She was a most uncompromising Christian, but was greatly respected by the native inhabitants, while the chief magistrate of the place (an Englishman who had marked sympathy for the Indian people, and was known as a great admirer of their literature and sacred books, in which he was well versed) was shot dead as he entered the theatre, where he had been invited by his Indian "friends" to witness an Indian play. I think this shows that Christianity is not a cause of dissension or strife now in India. The time has passed when Christianity was looked upon only as a caste of which the distinguishing tenet was the privilege of eating any and every thing. It is now better understood, and Christ is generally acknowledged to be a great Teacher.

There are many careless-living Christians in India as elsewhere, and the natives do not fail to remark this, and comment pityingly: "They do not believe in their own religion!"

All persons who lead a life consistent with their professed religion (whichever it may be) are admired in India, and as the great Lord Lawrence

said: "Christian principles acted on in a Christian spirit will never injure the prestige of the English Government in India."

The obstacle to educated Indians accepting Christianity is, that though most of them acknowledge Christ to be one of the greatest religious teachers, they cannot admit that He is God, except so far as they think all great men God-like. It is now the fashion among them to say that "there is good in all religions."

One Indian gentleman holding a high official position assured me that this was his opinion, and added that he said prayers every day to Krishna (the Hindu divinity), to Mohammed, to Jesus Christ, to Buddha and to Mrs. Annie Besant. Having made this statement he looked at me triumphantly as if expecting me to express admiration of his liberal views.

CHAPTER X

INDIAN SERVANTS—PETITIONERS AND PERTINACITY—A
LADY LAWYER

ALTHOUGH I have been some years in India I have not yet fathomed the idiosyncrasies of the Indian domestic servant.

I flattered myself that our Mohammedan butler was really to be trusted. He is a young man, and, when I joined Bob, was second boy; when the elder servant left, the abilities of the younger pointed him out as fit to be raised to the position of khamsamah. He has fulfilled the duties of the post excellently, and, unlike most Indian servants, will turn his hand to anything; the Madam Sahib has only to express her needs and he will supply them, her difficulties, and he finds a solution.

One day when I was expecting friends to dinner, the cook was found lying intoxicated on the kitchen floor in the early afternoon.

In announcing this catastrophe to his mistress

the butler added : “ But Madam Sahib need not trouble. *I* will cook the dinner.”

This he did to perfection, and not only cooked it, but brought it to table, with the help of the second “ boy ” and the visitors’ “ boy.” In India your butler always accompanies you when you dine out.

Our clever servant, whose name was Abdul, won my heart on his wedding-day. I had been to visit an Indian lady in the afternoon and returned with a long garland of tuberose and pink Persian roses round my neck. When I took off the garland and hung it up in the drawing-room I noticed that Abdul looked at it with longing eyes. While I was dressing for dinner the ayah said : “ Does Madam Sahib want to keep that garland ? If not, will she let Abdul have it to wear at his wedding ? ”

“ Certainly. But will it not be faded ? ”

“ No, the wedding will be to-night, after Madam Sahib’s dinner is over.”

I had previously heard much discussion as to what day would be propitious for the wedding—on which day and at what hour would the moon be in the right quarter ?

At last this evening was fixed upon.

Abdul waited on us at dinner in his usual

impassive manner, showing no signs that an important event was toward.

After I went to bed I heard much tom-toming, beating of drums, and native music in the bazaar, and at intervals of sleep it again smote my ears. These were the signs that Abdul's wedding ceremonies were taking place. The festivities lasted all night, but yet punctually as the hall clock struck seven I heard as usual the announcement at my door : "*Char tyar, Madam Sahib,*" and peeping out I saw Abdul, still in his wedding costume, a long crimson satin coat, a gold and white turban, and my garland round his neck. He had placed the tea-tray at my door and was retiring. I had on a morning robe, so I greeted him and wished him happiness, and added :

"I did not expect you this morning, Abdul."

"Madam Sahib's work must be done," he replied.

He was self-conscious, but evidently pleased that I should see his splendid attire.

When I was very ill I really owed my life to this "boy," who would stay up all night heating water for successive hot bottles and fomentations and in the day-time would summon the ayah to bring in jugged broth or arrowroot at the pre

scribed times. The ayah troubled her head very little about her sick mistress, and liked to lie on her back and smoke cigarettes in her hut, instead of staying in the sick-room. When I got better I dismissed her, and determined to do without an ayah, for I had had a succession of bad ones.

Now with regard to Abdul, although he was in his way really attached to me, and excellent at his work, yet he did not scruple to cheat me whenever it was possible (by this time I had taken over the housekeeping and accounts); indeed he would have considered that he failed in his duty to himself and his family had he not seized every opportunity of making money at our expense.

This last hot weather we took a furnished bungalow at a hill station, intending to spend Bob's leave there.

I sent Abdul on in advance to get everything ready for us, and said: "If you find things wanting, get what is necessary, and I will pay for all when I arrive."

At the end of the first week after our arrival at the hill station, Abdul brought in his weekly account, and charged for a good many kitchen and pantry requisites, and, according to custom, brought in the articles in question to show me,

for a servant's word as to his purchases is never trusted. I was in a hurry, and when the things were spread out on the floor in front of me, I just glanced at them and paid the accounts without demur.

About a month later the second "boy" and Abdul had a quarrel, and the former came to me in great anger and said: "Madam Sahib does not know Abdul; he is a thief. Those things he told you he had bought new for this house were your own property. Abdul brought them up from Haryana among the kit!"

On inquiry, these accusations proved to be true.

Abdul was not greatly disconcerted at being found out. Would not Madam Sahib forgive him this once? He would *never* do it again!

What was to be done? Could I ever trust Abdul again? No! But what use would it be to send him away? I should only get another servant, who would certainly be equally dishonest, and probably not nearly so capable. So Abdul stayed on, and though I keep a sharper look-out upon him, he will outwit me whenever he chooses to do so.

The lower-class Indian, whether in Government employment or domestic service, has great

faith in the efficacy of a written appeal. If he wants a holiday, an increase of pay, or any kind of favour, he goes to a petition-writer, who for a small payment will provide him with a moving appeal to present to his employer.

Every town has a petition-writer (in large towns there are scores), generally a half-educated man who has obtained a smattering of English at a Mission School or Government School, but not remained long enough to qualify for a good post, so he has taken to petition-writing as a means of earning a living, and generally finds it a very profitable business. He will also write letters of all sorts, including love-letters, and it is said that servants who fail to get satisfactory chits (testimonials) from the employer they are leaving, get the public scribe to provide them, which accounts for servants so often failing to come up to expectations formed by new employers after the perusal of chits presented to them by the candidate for service.

One may see the scribe or petition-writer any day seated in the market-place or at a street corner, with legs tucked under him, and a pad on his knee, ready for all applicants for his services.

When translated into English by the public

scribe, his customer's desires are often expressed in a fantastic manner, for imperfectly educated natives have a great liking for introducing current sayings and idioms, and misapply them with grotesque results.

I received the following letter from my cook's wife. He had left her behind in Goa.

“ HONoured AND MUCH RESPECTED MADAM
SAHIB,

“ I want to trouble you with these few lines because the cook you engaged some time ago is my married husband, and he plays tricks with me since you engaged him. He has become proud and takes no notice of my letters; he never looks after me or sends me money for food. I have been reduced to half size. My daughter did help me, but now I am sorry to tell you she has gone to the dogs. Let God excite tenderness for me in your heart. You give my married husband beans; tell him you discharge him if he let me starve, and then I shall ever pray for your long life and prosperity.

“ I am your obedient slave,

“ MARIE-BAI.”

One day Bob showed me the following petition from a candidate for employment :

“ Respectfully sheweth that your Honour’s servant is a poor man in agricultural behaviour, and depends on the seasons for the staff of life. The sky has been as brass, want of rain has caused the crops to fail, wherefore your petitioner prays you to take him into your saintly service that he may have permanent labour to support his family ; therefore he falls upon his family’s bended knees and implores your Honour to have pity on this damnable, miserable petitioner, who entreated Municipality for employment in removing filth, but this was not granted. Petitioner has officiated in several capacities and will gird up his loins to fill any post your Honour will bestow.

“ I have the honour to be

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ RAMDAS, Candidate.”

If the first petition is not attended to, others will follow ; if they are unanswered, the petitioner will sit at the gate day after day, however often the puttiwalas eject him from the compound, for there are no such pertinacious beggars as the natives of India. They feel sure that if only they persevere, they can worry the person to whom they apply into granting their petition.

This is only another instance which shows how

little the East has altered since the days when the Gospel parable of the Unjust Judge was told to the disciples of Christ.

In old days, before the English occupation of India, when there were no Law Courts and no means of obtaining redress of wrongs but by inducing a mamletdar to order the village patel to summon a panchayet, a council of five men chosen from the village worthies, which council held their meeting under a tree or in a temple-court, importunity was the means usually adopted for obtaining payment of debts. The creditor sat down on the threshold of the debtor, and clamoured before his door (or employed others to do it), appealing to the gods and invoking curses on the debtor or any person who had in any way injured him. It was a point of honour with the neighbours not to disturb the author of these importunities if they were justified ; and some satisfaction was usually procured by means of them. If they were unjust, the party thus harassed naturally concurred with the plaintiff in wishing to refer to a panchayet.

Similar means were employed to obtain justice from a great personage : standing before his residence, assailing him with clamour, holding up torches before him in daylight,

pouring water on the images of the gods without ceasing. If these measures failed, a still more powerful expedient was resorted to for obtaining justice; this was to get the whole caste, village, or trade to join in the above demonstrations till the demands of the wronged member were satisfied.

These customs having been established from time immemorial, it is not to be wondered at that pertinacity has become inherent in the native character, and now that Law Courts are opened to them they carry on litigation year after year for a lifetime.

The ladies of India who are possessors of property are very litigious, and this has been provided for by the Government of India, who have appointed Miss Cornelia Sorabji, D.L., as legal adviser to purdah ladies. No small part of her labours consists in persuading her clients not to go to law about trifles, or without good cause; so successful has she been in this respect, as well as in conducting necessary law-suits to a satisfactory conclusion, that Government have publicly expressed their approval of Miss Sorabji's work, increased her salary, and given her the status of a permanent Government official.

Miss Cornelia Sorabji is one of a gifted family, her mother, Mrs. Sorabji of Poona, having been a pioneer of female education in the Bombay Presidency, as well as an enthusiastic missionary. Mrs. Sorabji's husband was a Parsee gentleman converted to Christianity.

Miss Cornelia Sorabji was one of the first to enter the lists to claim the right of woman to obtain a lawyer's degree and practise the legal profession.

One of her sisters is a fully qualified medical practitioner and was an able co-operator with her husband, the late Dr. Pennell, in his valuable work as a medical missionary among the wild tribes of the north-west frontier of India.

Two other sisters are engaged in educational work, one as head of a college for Indian girls at Dacca in Bengal, and the youngest sister, Miss Susan Sorabji, is the Principal of St. Helena's High School, Poona, a very fine building with all the latest improvements and equipment thought desirable by educational authorities; the funds requisite to erect it Miss Sorabji obtained by a lecturing tour in America. She has named the school after Miss Helen Gould of New York, the great heiress, the principal contributor to the funds.

In this school the American system of educating boys and girls together is being tried. The greater number of the students are Parsees. In the class-rooms you may see a tall youth of seventeen standing next to a girl of the same age in a mixed class. Excepting the drawing master, all the teachers are ladies, and it says a good deal for the high estimation in which the abilities of Miss Susan Sorabji and her staff are held that boys should stay on when they reach the age to enter the classes of the upper standards and enter as students for matriculation (on their success in passing these exams. their future livelihood depends) in preference to entering a college with male professors, of which there are several in Poona. I happened to visit the spacious class-room of the highest standard pupils, where a lady teacher was interrogating a mixed class of young men and women on the Georgian Era, and I heard a tall Parsee youth give, in fluent English, a clear, concise outline of the policy of Pitt!

To return to the Sorabji family. The only brother, Mr. Richard Sorabji, is, like his sisters, a strenuous social worker and able educationalist. As Professor of Law at the University of Allahabad his position enables him to exert his

influence among the students, and, being a staunch adherent of the British Raj, he does his best to foster the spirit of Imperialism among them.

This is a greatly needed work, for the rising generation of Indian youth—not realising, as their parents do, the state of India before it came under the British Government, and being consequently unable to recognise the great benefits that Government has conferred on the Indian people—are mostly bitterly anti-English in their politics.

CHAPTER XI

DELHI FIFTY YEARS AGO

THE newspapers all over the world are now ¹ full of the great doings of the Delhi Durbar, and the splendid reception accorded to King George and Queen Mary by their Indian subjects.

I have been thinking a great deal about the really extraordinary change that has taken place in Indian public opinion, and in the relations of the Indian Princes and people to their English overlord and the English Government since there was last a King and Court in Delhi. That was fifty years ago, and fifty years is a short time in which to effect so great a change.

The reign of the last King of Delhi ended with the Indian Mutiny.

Our neighbour the Zemindar¹ had ancestors who were living in Delhi during the siege, and somehow or other got possession of a number of papers seized in the private apartment of the

¹ At the time this letter was written, December 1911.

King of Delhi, and also an account of his trial, with a sketch of him in pencil done by one who was a witness at the trial.

Knowing that I was interested in the history of old times, our friend kindly allowed me to look through these documents, from which I gathered the following details. The last King of Delhi, the representative of the ancient Moghul Dynasty, was Mohammed Bahadur Shah. The English had been his friend and the friend of his family. His grandfather, Shah Alam, having had his eyes put out and suffered every indignity at the hands of the Persian invader Gulam Kadir, fell into the hands of the Mahratta powers, when their commander-in-chief, the French General Perron, defeated the Persians and took Delhi. The blind king was kept in confinement till Lord Lake defeated the Mahrattas in 1803, when the royal captive applied to the English for protection. He and his family were delivered from misery and oppression, and treated with generous sympathy. He was accorded a pension of £100,000 yearly and the Delhi Palace (a little town in itself) as a residence, and the titular rank of King of Delhi—he had no power outside his palace. The pension and the rank were continued to his

successors, and his grandson, the last King of Delhi, succeeded to the throne in 1837. He bit the hand that fed him, and was tried for treason, rebellion, and murder—the murder of fifty-two Englishwomen in his palace grounds.

The following was one of the letters brought forward at his trial; it was written by him to the Rajah of Cutch after the outbreak of the Mutiny.

“Consider yourself receiving Royal Favour. My Governor-General has come into my presence and affirmed that you, ever faithful one, having put the whole of the Infidels to the sword, have thoroughly cleansed and purified your dominion from their unclean presence. We have been extremely gratified to hear of your conduct. Should other Infidels reach your territory by sea you will have them slain. In doing this, you will act entirely in accordance with our wishes.”

Second letter to same: “It is clear to our belief that throughout your dominions the name and trace of those ill-omened infidels, the English, cannot have remained; if, however, by any chance some have escaped by keeping concealed, first seek out and slay them, then come to our Presence. Consideration and friendliness a thousand-fold will be shown you.”

After the Mutiny had commenced, whoever brought the head of an Englishman to Delhi received a reward of two rupees.

Holkar, Maharajah of Indore, sent five English heads as a token of loyalty to the King of Delhi, and announced his fixed determination to exterminate the English, whom he described as "clever in all villainy."¹

Another letter to the King from a certain Khan of Tonk says: "Eighteen infidels have been despatched to Hell by your slave's own hands. I trust that arms and funds will be bestowed on me to enable me to continue the fight."

Many reasons have been suggested as the cause of the Sepoys' revolt, usually spoken of as the Indian Mutiny, but the intrigues which led to it had long been fostered at the Court of the King of Delhi. Although insignificant and contemptible in character, and the possessor of only nominal power, he was looked upon by Mohammedans as the head of their faith and their rallying-point.

The excuse alleged for the soldiers' revolt was

¹ By way of contrast between *then* and *now*, it may be remarked that his descendant, the present Maharajah Holkar, plays cricket at Lord's, and is married to a wife educated by an English lady.

that they were compelled to use greased cartridges, which defiled their caste. The shining, greasy appearance of cartridge-paper was declared by the malcontents of the native army to prove the presence of the fat of cows or swine—the former sacred to the Hindus, the latter obnoxious to the Mohammedans.

At Barrackpore, General Hearsey called his brigade together and explained to them that the glazed appearance of the cartridge-paper was due to the starch used in making it, and orders were issued permitting the Sepoys to grease their own cartridges. As a matter of fact there was not a single greased cartridge in the magazines of the three native regiments at Meerut, who were the first to mutiny, nor of those at Delhi. The native soldiers themselves were the best informed on these points, for their cartridges had always been manufactured in the regimental magazines by persons of their own caste and creed, who would have refused the work had they been required to use material offensive to their religious prejudices. Had the cartridges been a rock of offence the soldiers could have taken their discharge, which was always granted without demur.

Neither Hindu nor Mussulman Sepoys had any

objection to the cartridges, as is proved by the eagerness with which they sought them for months at a time under allegiance to Mohammed Shah, the titular King of Delhi, to fight against the power to which they owed fealty. During the trial of the King of Delhi, his private papers were brought forward as evidence, amongst them petitions on all sorts of subjects, from the tinkering of a cooking-pot to the crack in a horse's foot, and each had been thought worthy of the royal signature, but no reference to the grievance of the cartridges, or any other grievances of which they had to complain. Numbers mutinied without alleging any grievance, because they thought the opportunity favourable, and fancied that they would have a chance to plunder and murder with impunity.

The Mutiny was a struggle of the natives for power and place by the expulsion from the country of a race of alien rulers, and the Court of Delhi, and the last representative of the House of Timur, were the rallying-point and figure-head.

The old King of Delhi, Mohammed Shah, was a degenerate, "a shrivelled impersonation of malignity, dead to all honourable feeling."

So he was described (to his face) at his trial before the English Commissioners.

When the Mutiny broke out at Delhi, English ladies were induced to take shelter in the Palace, and told they would be in safety there. Had the King wished to save them, it would have been quite easy to hide them in the endless apartments of the zenana, which no man dared enter. When the soldiers came to the King's audience-hall to ask permission to massacre the Englishwomen, he said: "Let the soldiers do as they like!"

And this in spite of the fact that one of his sons and some of his counsellors had begged him to prevent the massacre, for that it was contemplated was known in the city two days before it took place.

This was the petition drawn up by the late King of Delhi's agent: "Respectfully sheweth that justice is approved and lawless cruelty condemned by the Creator of the Universe. We therefore pray that you will tell the officers of the Army who intend to request your sanction and permission to slay the English ladies and children; that agreeably to their prayers at the beginning of the war you placed your hand on their heads and joined them in the cause of the Faith, but that in killing the prisoners in question they would abandon the tenets of our religion which

teach that it is not lawful to slay women, and you will not give an order contrary to the Laws of the Prophet. Tell them also that if they do not approve, they must first wreak their vengeance on your Royal Person.

“Considering it is necessary, we have laid the subject before Your Majesty.”

But the King only said : “Let the soldiers do as they please.”

So forty-six English women and children were taken out into the courtyard, encircled with a rope, and cut down where they stood, in the presence of a crowd from the city who climbed on the walls to watch, and uttered the coarsest execrations.

Sweepers put the corpses together on a cart, and threw them into the river.

One of the King's sons had (as previously stated) interceded for their lives, but it is said that his other three sons were exultant spectators of the massacre, and knowledge of this incited Hodson¹ to cut them down with his own hand, when they fell into his power after the fall of Delhi, an action for which he has been greatly blamed by those who did not know the above facts.

The wretched old King did not profit by his

¹ Colonel Hodson, of Hodson's Horse.

cowardice or malignity. When the English recovered possession of Delhi, he was tried, found guilty, and deprived of rank and riches, and sent to die in exile. But long before the English re-entered, he had reason to wish himself back under their protection, and so had the inhabitants of Delhi, as the following letters, found among the King's private papers, will show. Though somewhat lengthy they are so quaintly expressed that they are worth a glance, and give a peep behind the scenes.

Knowing how strenuous a task is kingship in the twentieth century, and what is required and expected of the occupant of a European throne, we are struck by the contrast afforded by a description of the manner in which an Eastern potentate passed his days. I take the following account from the old documents above mentioned :

“The time between dawn and daylight having been passed in the usual religious observances, the Respected of the State (the Physician) was allowed the honour of feeling the King's pulse. The King then went to the Hall of Audience, took his seat on the Throne of State, and received the obeisance of the great, and petitions from others. After the morning's business had been

transacted, His Majesty retired to his private, kingly hall, and partook of the delicacies prepared for dinner, after which he enjoyed a siesta. He, on awaking, repeated the prayers appointed for that hour, and afterwards occupied himself with such pastimes as he delights in.

“Towards the end of the day he honoured the Physician by allowing him to feel the royal pulse. A cooling draught was prescribed. After drinking it, His Majesty condescended to visit the luxuriant garden of Salingarh for relaxation, and on returning retired to his private apartments. A little later he came into the special Hall of Audience, and held a levée. After sunset those in attendance at Court were honoured with permission to leave.”

This ended the royal day.

From the following petitions it appears that the King did not keep his sons in order, and that after the mutineers had got the upper hand in Delhi the life and property of the citizens were not safe.

“Joint petition of Jogal Kishwa and Sheoprashad, Merchants. To the King Mahommed Shah, Shelter of the world. Paying, agreeably to your Majesty’s orders, twelve hundred rupees into the Treasury we obtained a document under

your special signature, assuring us that we should for the future have full immunity from all vexation and annoyance at the hands of the functionaries of the State, the Princes Royal of illustrious descent, and the soldiers of the army. Notwithstanding this, troopers come daily, in the name of the Princes, to your slave's house, and wish to take our lives. Left without choice we have been sitting concealed for the last few days, and our servants were ill-treated. Denied ingress or egress to and from our house we have been rendered homeless as it were, and the privacy of our families destroyed. If the Princes Royal, delegated to protect the subjects of the State, incite to such conduct, where then can be any safety for the subjects? From your Majesty's goodness, clemency, and justice, equal to Nowsheran's, we expect that a written order will be addressed to each of the Royal Princes of illustrious ancestry, namely their Highnesses Mirza Moghul Bahadur, Mirza Khair Sultan, Mirza Aboul Bakr, Mirza Mohammed Abdulla, instructing them that for the future no soldiers are to be permitted to go to your slave's house to commit acts of aggression."

At the bottom of the paper is the autograph order of the King in pencil: "Mirza Moghul

Bahadur will station a guard at the house of petitioner."

There is another petition from Hassein al Rah :

"To the King—Shelter of the World.

"Respectfully sheweth that His Majesty's younger son, Mirza Aboul Bakr Sahib, has lately been in the habit, with unrestrained licence and recklessness, of visiting for evil purposes the house of Princess Farkhunda Zumani (which is situated near your petitioner's house) and indulging in all those acts that may be expected to result from drunkenness. According to his custom he came yesterday to the Princess's house before noon and remained there drinking spirituous liquors and hearing singing for the remainder of the day. About an hour and a half after sunset the Mirza wished to leave, but the key of the street gate being with the watchman and he not coming immediately, the Mirza was delayed, and getting angry drew his pistol and fired on this slave, who happened at the time to be sitting at the door of his house with friends. Though there was no pretext for this violence your slave kept silence, nevertheless the Mirza gave unlimited hand to his tongue, and thought to enter your slave's house and carry off all the property it contained. Your

slave, however, got inside and fixed on the chain. The Mirza had discharged his pistol intending to kill your slave, but as some little part of my life remains uncompleted the shot did not take effect.

“The Mirza ordered his troops to break down the door, plunder the house, and slaughter the inhabitants. The watchman arriving, the Mirza threw him forcibly to the ground, and it seemed probable that he would have severed his head from his body. This did not occur, but the Mirza battered his back and head with blows, leaving him half dead. The soldiers fired bullets and began to plunder the houses ; many passers-by were hit by the bullets and nothing now remains of the property that belonged to the residents in this part of the city. In this disturbance your slave has had a foretaste of the Day of Judgment. Depending on Your Majesty’s justice, I trust that full punishment will be awarded, otherwise to-morrow is not far from to-day, and the said Lord of the World, Mirza Aboul Bakr, bent on evil purposes, will certainly return to carry out his designs, and what we helpless subjects will have suffered will be something astounding.”

At the end of the petition was an autograph

from the King to his eldest son, "the Commander-in-Chief, Tiger in battle and Candle of Religion," to the effect that he was to see that the petitioner's property was restored.

It is plain that the revolting Sepoys soon became uncontrollable, and the King probably wished himself back under English protection, for he contrasts their conduct towards himself with that of the English, much in favour of the latter.

He issued an address to the soldiers, in which, after enumerating their depredations in the city, he complains of their disrespectful treatment of himself; he continues: "Although repeated orders have been given to the Infantry now lodging in the Royal Farash Khana, and to the Cavalry staying in the Palace Garden to vacate these places, they have not done so. Not even Nadir Shah or any of the British Governors-General of India ever entered these places on horseback. Whenever the most distinguished officers of the highest rank appointed by the British Government visited the Palace, they dismounted at the door of the Hall of Public Audience, and came thence on foot. Now the troopers gallop right up to the door of the Hall of Private Audience, unsuitably dressed,

without turbans and in utter disregard of the respect due to Royalty. The officers, too, make a practice of coming to Court carelessly dressed, wearing caps instead of turbans and carrying swords. Never during British rule did any member of their profession dare to behave in such a manner. I assured the army I should look on them as my children, I have indulged all your wishes, but it is to be deplored that you in return have shown no consideration for my age and infirmities. The care of my health was in the hands of my physician, Ahsan Ullar Khan—he incurred your displeasure because people jealous of my favour accused him of not wishing well to our cause, and you arrested him. Now there is none to care for me but God. The soldiery ought now to gratify me and release my physician from arrest, so that he may be at liberty to come and go whenever he thinks it necessary to feel my pulse. Tell me plainly if you do not intend to heed me. I shall then swallow a diamond and kill myself.”

To such straits was the last representative of the Royal House of Timur reduced by those upon whom he had reckoned to restore him to place and power.

By these old records I wish to emphasise the

contrast between the Delhi of fifty years ago and the Delhi of to-day.

Contrasting *then* and *now* one feels that on all counts it is well that the old régime has passed away for ever, and that the change has been for the better.

I shall not write an account of the Delhi Durbar, as you must be surfeited with the newspaper descriptions, but next week I shall tell you about the visit of the King and Queen to Calcutta, in some ways the most remarkable episode of their stay in India.

CHAPTER XII

THE ROYAL VISIT TO CALCUTTA—THE PAGEANT—CAN
ENGLAND KEEP INDIA ?

THE week of the visit of the Emperor and Empress of India—King George and Queen Mary—to Calcutta, up to now the capital of British India, has been a wonderful time, but you will have read so much about it in the papers that there is little left for me to tell. Preparations had been going on for weeks beforehand, as well as rehearsals of the principal functions—the Pageant; the Torchlight Tattoo, the Cavalry Ride, etc. Although the whole city had apparently turned out and paid a good deal of money for seats all along the lengthy route from the landing stage at Prinsep's Ghaut to Government House, to witness the King's arrival, it passed off rather tamely.

Indian natives do not cheer, and not a sound of welcome was to be heard as the Royal Procession passed along the principal part of the

route, the Red Road, which was lined on either side by serried rows of spectators seated tier upon tier on stands erected for that purpose.

“Do cheer,” I cried to the group of Englishmen belonging to our party, and some American friends seated in the next row. So in that corner hats were waved, and a good hurrah went up, not unnoticed by the royal lady and gentleman in their open landau, who turned and gave a special bow markedly in our direction.

European Calcutta had felt very gloomy and depressed when they heard that Calcutta would no longer be the capital of India and that the transfer of the headquarters of the Government from Calcutta to Delhi had been announced by the King at the Durbar the previous week, and Calcutta was certainly not feeling enthusiastically loyal! But King George’s very tactful speech delivered on the occasion of addresses of welcome being presented by several public bodies (the Chamber of Commerce, the University, the Members of Council, etc.), on his arrival at Government House, changed the current of public opinion, and the King and Queen became personally immensely popular with all who came in contact with them during their stay. Queen Mary came in for a very special and individual

share of popularity, and was pronounced a splendid type of Imperial womanhood.

Function succeeded function during the royal visit, but to my mind the most striking feature was the monster crowds (*monstrous* crowds, a native journalist called them), hundreds of thousands of natives of India, who swarmed all over Calcutta, thronging the streets, covering the Maidan, sitting for hours waiting anywhere where they thought it likely they might catch a sight of that exalted being, the King-Emperor, though, when they did see him, some were surprised and said: "He is just like any other man!"

The native quarters of Calcutta sent forth uncountable thousands, and it seemed as if the whole population of Bengal (a province larger than Great Britain) had come into Calcutta. They were far beyond the control of the police force, who confessed they would have been powerless to deal with such a multitude should trouble arise; but all were in holiday humour and ready to obey orders to move hither and thither.

On the night of the illuminations, which were really very wonderful, we started out in our carriage, intending to make a tour of the city,

but soon found it hopeless to make any progress, so great was the throng of vehicles of all sorts. Many native women had left their seclusion, and shabby hired gadies (much like the worst of the old London four-wheelers) were loaded with women and children inside, and their menkind on the roof. These humble vehicles fared slowly along next to handsome private carriages or splendid motor-cars reduced to footpace.

We left our carriage, and went round Calcutta on foot. Occasionally, where the crowd was thickest, our party could not keep together; I and another lady got separated from the rest and had to make our way alone for a considerable distance, but not a rude word did we hear, nor did we suffer from discourteous pushing or elbowing. Neither is it on record that there was any pocket-picking, though the greater number of the throng of pedestrians were of the poorest class.

There were many and varied functions to be attended during the royal visit, but the day of the Pageant might be called the people's day. The Pageant was to depict scenes from Indian history and give illustrations of various phases of Indian life. It was to take place on the Maidan (the Hyde Park of Calcutta). A

pavilion was erected in which the royal party were to sit, and an immense circular space or amphitheatre in front of this pavilion was set apart for the Pageant; this space was only enclosed by a bamboo railing, and behind this railing were thousands of native spectators, some seated on the ground, others on roofs of carriages or branches of trees. For those who could afford to pay for tickets, tiers of seats were erected on one side. When their Majesties, and their suite, together with the Viceroy and Lady Hardinge, arrived at the pavilion, Maharajah Sir Prodyot Cooman Tagore and Maharajah Jagendra Nath of Nattore held State umbrellas over their Majesties' heads as they walked from the carriage to the steps of the entrance to the pavilion, and the Maharajah Kumar of Mourbanj and the Murshidza of Murshedabad held fans of State behind the State chairs on which their Majesties were seated.

The Pageant consisted of two processions, which marched from the most distant point in the amphitheatre, one moving to the right and the other to the left, and converged in front of the Royal Pavilion. The two processions were representative of the two predominant races of India, the Mohammedan and the Hindu. One

202 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

was the Nawroy or New Year's Day Procession held in all Mohammedan States. The first public celebration of the festival takes us back to very ancient times, the reign of Jamshid of the Seven-ringed Cup, the occasion being Jamshid's State entry into his newly founded city of Persepolis. It is generally called the Id (festival) of Jamshid. The Mohammedan New Year's Day is the 21st of March, when the sun enters Aries. This day was chosen by Jamshid. The procession at the Calcutta Pageant was modelled on the one instituted by the Emperor Akbar in 1556.

It included many magnificently caparisoned elephants and camels, bearing representatives of national personages, musicians, drums, banners, standards of all ages and races, spearmen, shield-bearers, axe-bearers, emblem-bearers, armour-bearers, and swordsmen, all in distinctive costume. One of the elephants which attracted most attention had a silver howdah shaped like a lotus-leaf.

The other procession represented the Hindu Dasahara Procession, held every year to celebrate the victory of Ram over Ravana, the central episode of the national epic of the Hindus, the Ramayana. The gods were threatened by a race of terrible demons, called Rakshasas, ruled

over by their ten-headed and twenty-armed king, Ravana, who dwelt in Lanka, a large island south of India. Some say this island was submerged, but it is generally identified with Ceylon. The God Vishnu (the Preserver) took human form and was born in Rama, son of the King of Oudh. Rama married Sita, daughter of the King of Tirhut. Owing to the jealousy of his step-mother, Rama was sent into exile ; his devoted wife, Sita, followed him.

The wicked demon, King Ravana, disguised as a mendicant, induced Sita to emerge from the place where she was carefully guarded, to give him alms ; he then seized her and carried her off to Lanka. Rama went in pursuit, and after a fierce conflict killed Ravana and rescued Sita, after which the Rakshasas became friendly with the gods. The Dasahara festival is regarded as a happy time for the reunion of friends, the sinking of differences, and for universal reconciliation.

The paraphernalia used on the occasion of the Pageant was all lent by various ruling chiefs, and was chosen from the best contained in the treasuries and storehouses of thirty States. The two processions, after making the circuit of their respective halves of the arena, converged

in front of the Royal Pavilion, where they drew up in stately array, forming themselves into a huge square. A halt was called, while the Orissa Paiks danced their war-dance. Then, after saluting their Majesties, the processions retired, each taking the direction opposite to the one by which it had come. While the processions were passing, a band of one hundred trained Indian musicians using ancient Indian instruments (including the conch-shell, which may be called the father of all wind instruments) played old Indian music, but their programme also included a piece called "Flag of Britain," composed by the Maharajah Tagore.

After the Pageant was over, the King and Queen, quite unattended, drove in an open carriage round the edge of the enclosed arena, close to the frail bamboo railing, which could have been broken down at will by the thousands of native spectators stationed behind it. The King and Queen wished their subjects of the poorer classes to have an opportunity of seeing them at close quarters, and this display of trustfulness and courage was warmly appreciated by the Bengalees.

The Bengalee knows he has been in bad odour at headquarters latterly, for Bengal has

been the centre of the seditious movement which has disturbed India for the past four or five years, but now Bengalees could say: "The King feared not to come among us unguarded. He knows we are not all disloyal. He understands us!"

After the royal party had left the Pageant ground, the crowd of native spectators broke bounds, and thousands made their way to the Royal Pavilion and did homage¹ to the two gilded chairs of State on which the King and Queen had been seated—a spontaneous and striking demonstration of loyalty, which came as a surprise to official circles.

In India King George acted up to his reputation as "the King who sees for himself."

On the only afternoon during his stay at Calcutta which was not mapped out for a function, one of his suite asked at Government House for the use of a motor-car—"any sort would do."

The official thought it was for the aide-de-camp himself, and a not very new or swift car was ordered round. The King shortly afterwards came down and took his seat in it, and with only one companion started off for a drive, giving orders that he was to be taken right

¹ By kneeling down and placing forehead on seat.

through the heart of the native quarters, through all the purlieus and poorest parts of the city. Calcutta is a city of contrasts, and that between the wide, airy spaces and green parks and splendid shops and hotels of the English residential quarters, and the filthy, crowded bustees where the natives dwell is very striking.

The royal visit to India was a splendid exhibition of courage on the part of the King and Queen.

The general public in England do not trouble their heads much about what is going on in India, and do not understand the extent to which English people in India may have been said to be living on a volcano for the past few years, never knowing what a day might bring forth, and not without good grounds for expecting a recrudescence of the black deeds of fifty years ago.

When the royal visit was first proposed, the project was not welcomed by English officials in India. They thought the risk was too great ; with such enormous crowds, stretching over such vast areas, as would assemble at Delhi and Calcutta, it was impossible to ensure the safety of the King and Queen, however great watchfulness might be exercised, or whatever pre-

cautions could be taken. There would be thousands of chances for a fanatic to throw a bomb or fire a revolver, had any determined to do so.

After the Calcutta visit I remarked to a highly educated and highly placed Indian gentleman : “ Well, after all, it seems that the Indian nation in general is not disloyal, not averse to British rule ? ”

He replied : “ All that you have lately seen does not prove that. In India a king is looked upon as a sacred, almost divine personage. King George was safe enough, but it does not follow that we shall not shoot some more of his servants, if the wrong sort are sent out here to govern and guide us.”

Such a statement gives the thoughtful something to ponder over.

The removal of the seat of Government from Calcutta to Delhi has been greatly discussed. Delhi was the capital of the old Moghul Empire, overthrown by the English, and many people think it not wise to resuscitate old associations. The wisdom of this measure was questioned by many who are in a position to judge. Calcutta has always been associated with the English rulers of India ; it was from Calcutta that English rule

spread over the whole country, and it is associated in the minds of both races with many deeds of English heroism and important events which ensured the stability of the English rule. I left Calcutta, as it happened, on the day the Viceroy was leaving for Simla and Delhi, and would bid farewell to Calcutta as the capital of India. Delhi was henceforth to be the seat of the headquarters of the British Government in India, and in future the Viceroy would reside at Delhi.

I left Calcutta an hour before the Viceroy's train was to start, and as we steamed out of the station a heavy thunderstorm began. The newspapers next day told me that at the moment the Viceroy was leaving Government House the Royal Standard that floats over the roof was struck by lightning and fell to the ground.

The superstitious natives of India talked much of this inauspicious event. Was it a portent of the beginning of the end of British rule in India?

In some cases the wish was father to the thought. There are malcontents in every country and kingdom. We can keep India if we wish to.

In 1826 a Governor of Bombay, Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone, whose name is still remembered and beloved by the Indian people, wrote :
“ I used to think our Empire made of glass ; but when one considers the rough usage it has stood, both in old times and in recent, one is apt to think it is made of iron or rather of *steel*, which cuts through everything if you keep its edge even, but is very apt to snap short if it falls into unskilful hands.”

Elphinstone foresaw that the result of educating and raising the natives would be a demand for self-government.

He wrote :

“ If it is not thought desirable to admit natives to a share in the administration, it would be impolitic and inconsistent to take measures for their improvement and progress. It may be more than half a century before we are called on to give the natives a share in the government of their country, but the system of government and education we have established must work, sometime or other, such a change in the people of the country that it will be impossible to confine them to subordinate positions, and if we have not previously opened vents for their ambition and ability, we

may expect an explosion which will overturn our Government. We may have to give them a very large share in the government, retaining only that degree of control which is necessary to give the whole an impulse and direction, besides the military power. If, however, they obtain a large share of governing powers, they will probably not rest until they have obtained the whole, and if we raise them to a state that will admit of their governing themselves in a manner beneficial to themselves and not injurious to the rest of the world, we might gracefully resign our power into the hands of those for whose benefit it was entrusted to us, and take the glory of the achievement and the sense of having done our duty as our best reward."

These are fine sentiments, and, considering the spirit of the age, they will probably some day materialise into an accomplished fact. But that time has not yet come. There are still certain defects inherent in the Indian character which prevent their being (with a few individual exceptions) considered fit for self-government at present. When it comes, India will again be divided up into a number of small States, for, as the inhabitants of India are of so many different races and creeds, internal feuds and dissensions

would prevent the coming into being of the United States of India.

Justice is the basis of permanent popularity, and has been the mainspring of British rule in India.

As a Brahmin official said to me: "Native rulers are tyrannical, and would never show the same spirit of toleration as is shown by the British Government. under which life and property are safe, and a man has perfect liberty to go where he likes, and do what he likes."

The best of the Indian nation are becoming proud to consider themselves a part of the great world-wide British Empire, as is proved by the remarkable address handed to the Viceroy by a deputation of Indian gentlemen, to be sent to London, to the India Office, soon after the King's visit. This address was the spontaneous work of Indian gentlemen of every caste and standing. It is addressed to "the great English Nation," and expresses appreciation of the benefits derived from British rule, enumerating as such: "Consideration shown for the interests and welfare of the people, regard for their ancient laws and customs, and the constant endeavour to extend among the people the inestimable advantages of intellectual and moral improvement."

212 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

The address ends with the assurance that "the Indian nation take pride in forming part of the British Empire, and desire to play their part worthily as such."

This address has not attracted the attention it deserved in England, and has been little remarked on by the English Press. This, perhaps, is not surprising when one remembers how little English people—outside those who are themselves, or have relatives personally, connected with the country—care to know about India, how little pains they take to inform themselves as to facts or to correct prejudices and ideas that have been out of date long ago, how little they realise that the India of 1912 is not the India of fifty years ago

CHAPTER XIII

THE ARMENIAN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY IN CALCUTTA

DURING my stay in Calcutta I made some very interesting new acquaintances, an Armenian family. Out of the thousands of English people who visit Calcutta, how few know anything of the Armenian community which has been established there from very early days, and is increasing in number and influence. Some of the richest merchants in Calcutta are Armenians.

English people will perhaps know the names of Messrs. Apcar and Galstaun, well-known sportsmen.

The Apcars are a family of merchants and shipowners, one of whom is a Member of Council, and was recently knighted. Mr. Galstaun brought out Wootton, the well-known English jockey, to ride for him, though he did not have the luck to ride the horse which won for Mr. Galstaun the King's cup at the Calcutta races; the value of the cup was doubtless en-

hanced in the recipient's eyes by the fact that he had the honour of receiving it from the hands of King George himself.

Mr. Galstaun is a millionaire ; the foundations of his fortune were laid in the shellac trade.

Now I wonder if you know what shellac is ?

How few of those who sit at table enjoying a *recherché* dinner in the palatial residence this Armenian gentleman has built for himself guess that much of the money to pay for it all is obtained by the toil of an army of invisible, unpaid workers, the myriads of small insects in Indian jungles who create on the barks of trees the substance called shellac, much in the same way as bees create honeycomb or worms coral.

My friends have promised to take me over a shellac factory, and then I shall tell you more about it, for Calcutta is the principal market for this trade in India.

At the commencement of the British occupation of India, the Armenians, who were already settled in Calcutta, rendered important services to the English in troublous times, the days of Surajah Dowlah and the Black Hole of Calcutta ; in return they were granted special privileges by the East India Company.

Though Armenia is now divided between the

Turkish, Russian, and Persian Empires, and the Armenian people are scattered over the face of the earth, yet they are proud of and passionately attached to their native country, which they assert to have been the original Garden of Eden.

Their claim is justified by the fact that ancient Armenia answers best to the description given by Moses in Genesis of the country east of Palestine, which was like a beautiful garden fertilised by four rivers: the Euphrates, Dicris, Araxe, and Cyrus. This region is dominated by a range of mountains the highest peak of which has been known from time immemorial as Ararat.

We hear from Moses that when the flood subsided, the ark rested on Ararat, so the Armenians claim that their country was the cradle of the human race, and their first king, Haik (who reigned 2,200 years B.C.), traced his descent directly to Noah, being seventh in descent from Japheth. Haik helped Nimrod to build the Tower of Babel, but afterwards went to war with him and slew him, and set up an independent kingdom. Haik's son, Armen, added to his territory by conquest, and called his kingdom Armenia, and King Armen's son, Arar, gave his name to Mount Ararat.

216 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

The Armenians are passionately attached to their Church and the Christian religion.

They say their King Agbarus, who ruled Armenia contemporaneously with the life of Christ on earth, visited Syria, heard the preaching of our Lord, had the privilege of speaking to Him, and begged Him to come to Armenia or send evangelists.

It was by the Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddæus that Christianity was first preached in Armenia, A.D. 34. The foundations they laid were built on by the great Bishop known as Gregory the Illuminator, sent from Cesaræa, A.D. 257, and by this means, in the reign of Tiridah II., Christianity was proclaimed the national religion of Armenia.¹

Once accepted, the Armenians remained fiercely faithful to their religion, which is the more meritorious since it has been the chief cause of the terrible calamities which have overwhelmed the Armenian people. In old times, when the world was always at war, Armenia, from its position, was always a bone of contention, an acquisition desired by Persia and Turkey, who from time to time wrested it from the Emperors

¹ Armenia was the first State in the world to declare Christianity its official religion.

of the West. As they fell respectively under the sway of Persia or Turkey, they were urged, on pain of death, to abjure Christianity and embrace the Zoroastrian or the Mohammedan faith, and, to their credit be it said, they (with few exceptions) preferred to perish by fire and sword rather than abjure their religion. Many fled the country and settled in other parts of the world.

Armenians possess in a marked degree the instincts and abilities which ensure financial prosperity. Frugal in habits, they keep what they gain, and wherever they establish themselves, though they may arrive poor, they soon become prosperous. It is said by those who dislike them that a Greek can freeze out two Jews, but that one Armenian is in business a match for two Greeks.

Perhaps their success in business has been a factor in bringing upon them the terrible treatment they have suffered in the Turkish Empire. Their riches have excited the cupidity of an impoverished people and a bankrupt Government, which has seen in their spoliation an opportunity of gaining money to satisfy unpaid and turbulent troops, a people driven to revolt by starvation.

Whatever the cause, a great English statesman has characterised the Armenian massacres perpetrated by the Turks as having reached such a depth of atrocity as to constitute the most monstrous series of crimes that have ever disgraced the human race.

Yet, while their co-religionists were suffering in this terrible manner, the Great Powers, including alas ! England, looked on impassively, as if to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" It is true they sent polite messages through their Ambassadors from time to time to remind Turkey of the reforms as to treatment of Christian subjects promised by the Treaty of Berlin thirty years ago. These remonstrances were ignored in fact by Turkey, and it has been the small Balkan States who, driven to desperation, have endeavoured to free Europe from the Turk. Scattered as they are among many countries, the Armenians exist no longer as a nation, their solidarity seems to be that of their Church, and their Patriarch, called Catholicus, seems to be regarded as the representative of the Armenian people in the world, much as a king is among other races. The soil of their country being divided between three Powers (Persia, Russia, Turkey), had it not been for the wonderfully

strong hold kept on the race by its national Church, the nationality of the people must have been lost ; but this tie has prevented their being absorbed into the peoples among whom they dwell, scattered over three-quarters of the globe.

Nation and Church are one under the rule of a Catholicus and elected council.¹

When Mohammed II. took possession of Constantinople in 1458 he nominated the Bishop of Bysance Patriarch of the Armenian Church, with extensive powers over Armenian Christians, and this priest organised a civil as well as an ecclesiastical code, which lasted for four centuries. The Patriarch of Constantinople has always been acknowledged by the Turkish Government as the civil head of all Armenians in the Turkish Empire.

The Armenian Catholicus has two suffragans, the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Calcutta is in the Diocese of Jerusalem.

The Catholicus, who is called " His Blessedness," has his headquarters at Etchmiadzin, at the foot of Mount Ararat, where there is a

¹ It is calculated that there are about four millions of Armenians. Of these, 120,000 are Roman Catholics, with headquarters at Venice, and there are two thousand Protestant Armenians in Asia Minor who have been converted by American missionaries

220 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

beautiful Armenian cathedral and monastery. He visits from time to time the scattered Armenian communities of any size, such as Jerusalem or Calcutta, and is an object of great veneration.

In 1828 Etchmiadzin became part of the Russian Empire, and the Emperor of Russia nominates the Catholicus from two names submitted to him by the Armenian Synod, and announces the election to Persia and Turkey.

The Armenians have a calendar of their own. Their Christmas Day falls on January 6th, and they keep the festivals of the Nativity and Epiphany on the same day.

The Armenian church in Calcutta, which is called the Church of Holy Nazareth, is the oldest church in Calcutta, and consequently, though it is a fine building, standing in a spacious courtyard enclosing the priest's dwelling-house, it is situated in Old Calcutta, amid a labyrinth of narrow, over-populated streets, in the native city.

On Christmas Day an Armenian friend, the spirited and charming wife of an Armenian stock-broker living in Chowringhee, the best part of Calcutta, invited me to accompany her to the services at the Armenian church.

The Armenian Liturgy is one of the most beautiful and ancient in existence, compiled chiefly from the Liturgy of St. Basil, and added to by St. Gregory the Illuminator.

I was able to follow the service by means of a copy of Dr. Neale's translation of the Armenian Liturgy, as printed at the Convent of St. James at Jerusalem.

Dr. Neale, the greatest liturgical authority of the day, considered the rites of the Armenian Communion service the most dignified extant. The ceremonies differ from those of the Greek and Russian Churches, and are substantially the same as those in use in the earliest days of Christianity.

The Armenian Creed is almost the same as our Nicene Creed.

In the Church of Holy Nazareth at Calcutta the sanctuary is raised six steps above the choir. On the altar is a cross on which a picture of our Lord is enamelled, also the silver case in which is kept the Book of the Gospels, bound in silver and bejewelled. On each side of the altar are thirteen candles and candlesticks.

The service begins with the robing of the priest who is to celebrate. "Having banished evil thoughts," as the rubric says, he will go into the

222 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

vestry, and while the deacons are robing him the choir will sing : “ Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness,” and as each item of the vestments, alb, stole, girdle, cope, are placed on him he will ejaculate a suitable prayer. The vestments are of the colours of Aaron’s ephod, blue, scarlet, gold, and purple, looped together with carbuncles and fringed with gold. Then, before choir and priests enter the church, the following beautiful prayer is chanted :

“ O Lord our God who hast disposed in heaven troops and armies of Angels and Archangels for the Ministry of Thy glory, grant that with our entrance there may be an entrance of Holy Angels ministering with us, glorifying Thy Name.”

The first part of the service visible to the congregation is called “ The Little Entrance.” It is the procession of the reader with the Book of the Gospels ; he is attended by deacons carrying lights and fans. The waving of fans is intended to typify the quivering of the wings of the Seraphim before the Throne.

The Book is placed on the altar with much ceremony, and afterwards read with great reverence.

A deacon calls out : “ Let us attend.”

The choir respond : " God speaks."

. Then the priest, standing at the altar, reads the Gospel aloud, while two deacons stand on the lowest step of the sanctuary, each holding a lighted taper to typify " The Light of the World," i.e. " The Truth."

After the reading of the Gospel follows " The Great Entrance," that of the priest who is to celebrate, carrying aloft the bread and wine, the deacons following in procession with lights and fans.

The Christmas hymn is very beautiful : " Rejoice, oh ye heavens," etc.

The singing of the hymns is accompanied by the clashing of bells and cymbals.

After the hymn came a beautiful prayer for peace, with special mention and intercession for " those who fight against barbarians," alluding to Turkish tyranny.

The whole scene induces reverence : the choir in red cassocks chanting, the deacon censuring the congregation, and the celebrant reciting prayers in monotone. After the celebration is over, the Book of the Gospels is carried out of the sanctuary, and placed on a lectern just outside the gate of the choir, and on New Year's Day each member of the congregation,

holding a lighted taper, goes up in turn to kiss the Book. The tapers are taken home, and kept as sign of desire that the light of the Truth may enlighten their homes during the year. On great festivals such as Christmas and Easter it is customary to distribute blessed bread from the altar to the poorer members of the congregation after the morning service. In old days many came from a distance to keep Good Friday and stay for Easter. They were required to fast till the Easter Day celebration of the Holy Communion was over, but as *some* food was thought necessary, one bread cake was cut into four pieces and divided among four persons at the church door after the Good Friday morning service.

This is the origin of the custom of eating hot-cross buns on Good Friday.

The Armenian Church in Calcutta is well endowed, and contributes the greater part of the funds for the maintenance of the Armenian College, which has earned such a high reputation under its talented and high-minded principal, Mr. Tourian, who was educated in America, and has travelled widely.

Some of the scholars are sons of Armenians residing in Calcutta, but the greater number

come from the Armenian settlements in the Island of Java, and Julpha in Persia. The college is celebrated for its success in athletics, in this respect holding the first place among all the schools in Calcutta, having carried off challenge shields and cups for prowess in shooting, cricket, and football. The college is also very proud of the fact that its representatives (descendants of a race of sturdy Highlanders), in a tug-of-war, once pulled over a team of English soldiers, and their band of boy-scouts hold a high place in the estimation of the local scout-master.

The college authorities were much pleased that a contingent of their Volunteer Corps were told off to be on guard at Government House during the visit of the King and Queen.

The college device is a picture of Ararat with the ark on the top, and the words: "With hearts uplifted we look towards——"

The ark is exactly the shape of the wooden toy of our childhood.

The Armenian community in Calcutta have adopted European dress and habits of life, but would not think any dinner worth eating unless the menu included their favourite national dish, called pillau.

This is pieces of beef-steak amid a mountain of highly spiced rice, of which the preponderating taste is sage, and the green sage-leaves chopped fine colour the rice. The Armenians have not yet adopted European ideas as to the position of women. Only a few have sent their daughters to Europe for education, and though the young ladies go out to dances, play and sing and join in tennis and badminton, yet most of them take part in domestic duties.

The Armenian ideal wife is very domesticated, and is generally satisfied to occupy herself with household management and the upbringing of children. Submission to husband or father is considered the first duty, but on the other side is the idea that man should be the protector of the woman, and should provide for her. It is *very* seldom that an Arminenian girl goes out to earn her living as nurse or teacher or in any other way.

They are all musical; the arrival of visitors at a house is quickly followed by a request that they will play or sing—if they cannot, some member of the household must do so. The young ladies are well up in the latest London musical comedy music, and the young men in the music-hall songs. Both young men and

women are good dancers, and many of them are ready to do a hornpipe or a cake-walk for the delectation of friends in the privacy of the drawing-room.

Though the older generation of Armenians are devout churchgoers, the young people are not. They have adopted English as their vernacular, and as the church services are in Armenian, which they do not understand, they complain of finding the service tedious.

It is the custom for the priests to go on, or soon after, New Year's Day to each Armenian household in turn and perform the ceremony of blessing the house and its inmates. Few, however careless in life, would care to forgo that ceremony.

If some Armenians cling only to the outward ceremonies and the name of their religion, yet all seem to possess a full share of the distinctively Christian virtue of charity. All of them help lame dogs over stiles as a matter of course; and an Armenian who had it in his power, but refused, to respond to a petition for help from a poor member of the community would be looked upon very coldly.

CHAPTER XIV

CALCUTTA AND ITS PALACES—BISHOP AND NAUTCH-
GIRLS—A SHELLAC FACTORY

CALCUTTA has been variously described by various writers. It has been called the city of palaces, the city of endless talk, and the most foul-smelling city outside China.

I found that it certainly deserved the first and the last of these titles when we drove along the Chitpore road to Chorebagan to the Marble Palace of the late Rajah Rajendro Mullick to be present at an evening party given by his grandson, who now inhabits the palace, in honour of the marriage of a member of the family.

To get to the Marble Palace we had to drive through the oldest, most overcrowded part of Calcutta, the Native quarter, through streets so narrow that one could almost touch the houses on either side, tall houses with blankets and clothing suspended from every balcony and

window ; the streets and houses were teeming with a population that ignores all laws of cleanliness and sanitation.

When we arrived at our destination, the Marble Palace, we found it externally a very fine mansion standing in spacious grounds enclosed by a high iron railing. In the grounds were numerous statues, as well as aviaries of birds with gorgeous plumage.

On the steps of the wide verandah our hosts were waiting to receive their guests and welcome them ; this they did in modern fashion by shaking hands, but when the guest was a high-placed official, many profound bows and salaams were added. The task of welcoming the smaller fry was left to subordinate members of the household. As we passed through the entrance-hall the real magnificence of the palace began to be noticeable. The floor of the hall is of mosaic of costly stone and marbles, the ceiling is richly gilded, and many bronze and marble statues are stationed about the vast space, statues of Cupid and Psyche, the Three Graces, the Four Seasons, etc. From the entrance-hall we passed into the north hall, the walls of which are of splendid marble from Italy. A most catholic collection of statues is placed here. Among other per-

sonages represented are our Lord Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, Venus rising from the sea, Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, the Duke of Wellington, Napoleon, Venus de' Medici, etc.

The adjoining hall might be called the Queen's Hall, as the central object is a life-size statue of Queen Victoria in her Coronation robes, standing on a finely carved pedestal. The walls of this hall are of blood-veined Italian marble, and the pillars of green Grecian marble.

We made our way up the grand staircase and found ourselves in richly furnished apartments—handsome carpets and curtains, magnificent cut-glass chandeliers, mosaic and marble tables, ebony furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl, or finely carved. On the walls of this suite of rooms, which seemed endless, were some originals, and many copies, of paintings by the great masters, Rubens, Vandyke, Murillo, Raphael, Guido, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the Chinese artist Chin-Hing. The best sculptors of France and Italy were also represented by various examples of their art.

A catalogue was presented to each guest, that if so inclined they might find out particulars

as to the painters and subjects of the pictures that attracted their attention. There were so many rooms that at last we got tired of walking about and sat down in the principal drawing-room, and were well amused in watching the numerous company stream through to the picture-galleries. The best-known people in Calcutta were there, as well as a great many not generally recognised, and who did not appear to have any acquaintance among the other guests. These, I was told, came uninvited, for a great many unscrupulous people thus impose on the hospitality of the Mullicks, and seize a chance of seeing the wonders of the Marble Palace, which is not open to the public, or mentioned in handbooks, or known to the globe-trotter as one of the sights of Calcutta. After we had been sitting down a while, various Hindu dancing and singing girls gave their performances in each of the large rooms. They were fat ugly women, splendidly dressed in stiff brocades, or voluminous skirts of rich heavy silks, reaching to the ankle, and quite hiding the figure. Their dancing was only posturing of a very modest description, monotonous evolutions, frequent drawing up to shoulder and letting fall again the loose, wide sleeves of their outer

garment while arms were waved backwards and forwards in a stiff manner

The singing consisted of endless repetitions of one or two verses of English doggerel :

“My love is like a leetle birrd
That flies from tree to tree
Till at last it finds a home
And r-rests for e'er with thee !”

or,

“Twinkle, twinkle, leetle eshstar
'Ow I wondair vot you aire,” etc.

The singers are accompanied by musicians and go up to each little group of persons and apostrophise them with a verse, and then pass on to the next group. I am sorry to say some English ladies were rude enough to laugh in the faces of these poor women.

We soon got tired of this monotonous performance and found our way to the supper-room. A good Bishop who was visiting Calcutta confided to me, apropos of the performance we had just left, that at the first party given by natives to which he had been invited he had “felt a little uneasy” when a set of dancing girls entered the room, and said to his neighbour that he thought he had better retire, but was assured that he need have no apprehensions.

nothing approaching immodesty was to be looked for in the dance or songs which a well-bred Hindu would exhibit to European visitors. "And indeed," he said, "though there was very little grace in their performance, there was no approach to immodesty, so I sat still."

The supper provided at the Marble Palace had been undertaken by Peliti, a well-known Italian caterer in Calcutta, so excellent refreshments, such as commend themselves to Europeans, were provided, champagne was liberally served, chocolates and bonbonnières to take away were handed round among the guests, and the hospitality might be called princely. Of the European guests none looked better than Lady Jenkins, wife of the Chief Justice of Bengal, and it was pleasant to see how many friends she had among the Indian community, how anxious they were to attract her notice, how pleased when she spoke to them, and how she evidently contrived to say the right word to each and sent them away pleased and smiling. Lady Jenkins is famous as a sportswoman, and lately went on a shooting expedition through the wilds of Thibet alone, unescorted except by some native servants.

The character of the English people in general

has greatly changed during the past half-century—they have to a great degree toned down that exclusive and intolerant spirit which once made the English, wherever they went, a caste by themselves, disliking and disliked by all their neighbours. In his *Journal* published in 1845 Bishop Heber alludes to this; he says: “I see but too many instances of this foolish, surly national pride, which does us much harm in this country. We are not guilty of injustice or wilful oppression, but we shut out the natives from our society and a bullying insolent manner is assumed in speaking to them.”

That state of things has passed away for ever in India; no one but an occasional young, raw English subaltern would be guilty of such manners—if he did so, he would very soon find out his mistake. The Indian gentleman of the twentieth century is perfectly well able to hold his own in any English society, and assert his pride of race. Indeed, one of them said to me: “We were a highly civilised people, or at least possessed of scientific knowledge and culture, and living in power and splendour, when the British race were painting their bodies blue, and living as wild savages in those northern Islands.”

In fact I think the pendulum has swung a little too far the other way, and that Indian Princes get quite spoiled by all the attention and petting they get when visiting England.

As we were leaving the Marble Palace on the evening in question our attention was drawn to a portrait of the Rajah Rajendra Mullick by the Chinese painter Chin-Hing, and some portraits painted by one of the Mullick family who is an artist of no small talent.

The Mullick family are unique in India as possessing æsthetic and artistic talent. Most natives of India will look at a picture or photograph upside down, and not perceive the difference.

An immense fortune has been spent on the Marble Palace and its collections, which have been added to through three generations. The present owners have the same tastes as the founder, their grandfather, and making additions to the collections is the chief interest of their lives ; but the family has always been known for its princely charities, public benefactions, and loyalty to the British Raj.

The Mullicks never forget their poor neighbours in the tight-packed quarter of the native city, near which they dwell, and every day some

hundreds of poor people are fed in the compound adjoining the palace.

Calcutta is a city of contrasts. From the heart of the native quarters, half-an-hour or three-quarters of an hour's drive will take you to the Strand, the broad drive on the banks of the river Hooghly, skirting the Maidan or Park, and the Eden Gardens, where Calcutta society drive up and down to get an airing every evening—"eat the air" is the native expression. Various regimental bands from Port William play there every evening, and when the Viceroy's band is announced to play, there will be an assembly of carriages, many rows deep, stretching down the drive near the bandstand. It is a picturesque sight, many smartly dressed ladies will be promenading up and down the paths of the Eden Gardens, and the occupants of the carriages will represent all grades of Native and English society. The band begins to play at dusk, the whole promenade as well as the gardens are illuminated by electric light, the numerous craft on the river, including the mail steamers, also light up, and on the opposite bank are the tall chimneys of many factories pouring out smoke or giving out glaring light, and reminding me not a little of the Thames at

Westminster. That is India nowadays, a strange mixture of East and West. The Highland regiments are much admired in Calcutta, and when it is the evening for their band to perform in the Eden Gardens, they are always gazed at by a crowd of admiring natives when they leave the bandstand and march up and down playing their swirling bagpipes—always an item of the programme.

I have been to three characteristically native entertainments this week. One I have described ; the second was what is called a purdah party, a party to which only ladies are admitted. It was given by Lady Muckerji, wife of a Calcutta merchant prince. The parties are given at intervals by the members, Indian and English, of a society which has for its object the promotion of social intercourse between ladies of both nationalities, and their better mutual understanding.

On this occasion it was a garden-party on the most approved fashion ; chairs and settees and small tables were placed about the lawn, and our hostess, who spoke excellent English, gave a cordial welcome to her visitors. The wives and daughters of all the English officials were there, including Lady Duke, wife of the Lieutenant-

238 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

Governor of Bengal. Miss Cornelia Sorabji looked very graceful in a handsome gold and red saree. There were a great number of Bengalee ladies, all richly dressed in their national costume and many wearing beautiful jewels. Almost all of them spoke good English and fraternised cordially and without shyness with the English ladies. A very *recherché* and bountiful tea was spread in the spacious dining-room, and after we had partaken of it, hearing sounds of a piano upstairs, we followed the ladies we saw ascending the staircase.

Lady Muckerji's mansion is very spacious, and we went along many passages and in and out of numberless rooms till we arrived at the music-room, where we found a lady of our hostess's family seated at the grand-piano, singing a Bengalee song to her own accompaniment. Afterwards she and her cousins sang duets and trios without nervousness or hesitation. There were some charming Armenian ladies among the guests, also the beautiful French wife of a rich Parsee, who bore a striking resemblance to the "Mona Lisa" at the Louvre, enhanced by the fact that she was in mourning and wearing black. Altogether it was quite an international gathering and likely to attain the

ends it was destined to promote—the better understanding of each other by womanhood of various races.

My third party was also a garden-party. It was in the suburbs of Calcutta, at the house of a rich merchant whose hobby is the cultivation of orchids. When they are at the height of their beauty he invites the élite of Calcutta to come and see them ; a walk through the orchid-houses and the lovely gardens is quite a treat, for he cultivates many other flowers not indigenous to India. The hardy orchids grow out of doors in India, but the rarer specimens require glass. This Bengalee gentleman had the honour of sending a spray of orchids to be worn by Queen Mary every day during the royal visit to Calcutta, and on the last day of the visit he was received by the Queen and thanked by her for this delicate attention.

I must finish up by telling you of my visit to the shellac factory. Shellac is a very important article of commerce, the export trade amounting annually to hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling.

Lac is a resinous incrustation formed on the branches of trees by the lac insect (*coccus lacca*). In its natural form it is called *stick-lac*, the

manufactured product is *shellac*, bye-products are *button-lac* and *lac-dye*.

Lac is found on many kinds of trees which yield resinous sap, and the quantity and quality of the lac vary according to the tree on which it is found. The best sorts are found only on three kinds of trees, the palas- or dhak-tree, the peepu-tree (*ficus religiosa*), and the koosum-tree (*schleichera trijuga*). That found on the last-named tree is the best of all. The koosum-tree affords two crops annually, and its lac will keep good for ten years, while that of other trees only lasts for two years. The incrustation made by the lac insect is cellular, deep red or orange in colour, semi-transparent and hard; when it breaks, it cracks like glass. The substance is mainly formed by the female insects, which greatly outnumber the male. Each female inhabits a cell, and the incrustation seems intended to protect her progeny, for as soon as she is completely covered with it she lays her eggs and dies. The young, when hatched, work their way out through the maternal cocoon, eating the red substance with which it is filled, and thus acquiring the hue which makes them valuable as dye-producers. Directly they are out of the cocoon the young swarm over the twigs and

branches of the tree they find themselves on, crawling about till they find young juicy twigs to which they attach themselves by their probosces, and from which they cannot be removed alive. As the insects never leave the tree on which they are born, and one swarm succeeds another, the sap of the tree is gradually exhausted, then it decays and dies.

The artificial propagation of the lac insect is now understood and carried out by the formation of nurseries where trees suitable for the purpose are most abundant. The koosum-tree, from which the valuable orange-coloured shellac is produced, and the palas-tree, which affords the dark red lac so much used in commerce, are the most sought after. The artificial propagation of lac is carried on by a grafting process. Experts have to watch and fix upon a time before the larvæ have left the maternal cocoon. Then the brood-lac is found, and cut off, collected, and transported to the standard trees in the nursery, and attached to them by strands of matting or fibre. The best lac comes from Assam and Burma, but lac is found all over India, most abundantly in the Central Provinces and Bengal.

The lac-collectors are chiefly the jungle tribes of Indian natives who collect and sell small

242 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

quantities to the patwas or middlemen, who supply the dealers.

Calcutta is the principal market, and the headquarters of the shellac export trade.

We started early to visit the shellac factory; we were a party of six. Besides myself and my hostess were two young ladies and the brothers of each, one of whom was engaged in the shellac trade. The young ladies did not take the slightest interest in shellac, but were willing to go anywhere and do anything that afforded an outing.

We had to cross the Hooghly, for the manufactories are on the side of the river which is opposite the residential quarters of Calcutta. We started from the Strand landing-place in a trim little river steamboat. There was a tremendous crowd at the Ghats, for it happened to be a holy day, and thousands of women were performing the required bathing ceremony. As we crossed, the view down the river was very gay, a wide stretch of water glittering in the sunshine, and there were crafts of all sorts and sizes, from the native dinghy to the mail-steamer and the British gunboat. On the opposite bank the buildings are chiefly factories and houses for the staff; jute, cotton, shellac, sugar, etc., factories abound,

and factories are the same all the world over—flat square buildings, with tall chimneys emitting clouds of smoke. Calcutta is not exempt from fog, and at dusk, with a red sunset as a background to the factory buildings, the river, the craft, the tall chimneys, the smoky, murky atmosphere reminded one forcibly of the Thames near Westminster Bridge, while the tropical foliage and wide parks on the Calcutta side are a great contrast.

There was no fog on the morning of our expedition. The Hooghly is wide, and the crossing took half an hour. The blow on the river freshened us up, and the young people enjoyed a good many jokes amongst themselves, chiefly at the expense of the young shellac trader, who had not hitherto been very successful.

The factory manager was waiting for us, and at our request, and especially for my benefit, he began at the beginning to tell us all he could about the manufacture of shellac.

What the manufacturer has to do is :

First. To separate the resinous incrustation from the twigs or branches to which it is attached.

Secondly. To separate the resin from the colouring matter.

Thirdly. To convert the resin into shellac.

244 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

Fourthly. To form the colouring matter into cakes of dye, known as lac-dye.

A few factories have elaborate machinery, but in the greater number the processes are conducted in a primitive manner.

First the branches are stripped of the lac by being placed under a roller; the coating comes off when the roller is passed over the branch, leaving only a little to be picked off by hand. The lac is then broken up and passed through a coarse sieve; next it is put into tubs half filled with water, and is washed by coolies (native labourers) who, with no clothing but a cloth girt tightly round the loins, stand in the tubs, holding on to the bar above their heads, and stamp about on the lac till the liquid comes out, and after successive changes comes clear. The lac having been dried is placed in linen bags (it is now called *seed-lac*) and is taken to a place where there are a number of open charcoal furnaces. Two coolies each hold one end of a bag, one of the men twisting it slowly in his direction, the other in the opposite direction. The heat soon melts the lac in the bags, and the twisting makes it exude into troughs placed underneath. When a sufficient quantity of molten lac is in the trough, an operator takes it up in a wooden

spoon, and places it on a wooden or china cylinder, placed on a stand which gives it a sloping direction. An assistant (in this case a tall, fine native woman, in a red saree) now steps forward with a strip of agave in her hand which she uses in a dexterous manner to spread the lac into a sheet of uniform thickness which covers the upper end of the cylinder. The operator cuts off the upper edge with a pair of scissors ; the assistant then lifts up the sheet and waves it to and fro till it becomes crisp. It is then held up to the light, and if any bits of *grit* are perceptible the operator removes them with his fingers from the sheet.

These brittle sheets are laid one upon another and the pile is counted up at the end of the day's work. The chief operator is paid according to the number; but the assistant has a fixed daily wage, and the poor coolies who do treadmill-work in the tubs only get sixpence a day, out of which they have to feed themselves and family. Fourpence a day is the average labourer's wage in India. The fresh sheets have a rich, golden lustre. They are the product called shellac.

Every one must have seen and admired at one time or another specimens of the beautiful Chinese or Indian lacquer work.

Bracelets and other articles of jewellery worn by natives, fancy boxes, tables, candlesticks, etc., are manufactured and sold in great quantities in India, but vast quantities of shellac are exported to Europe and used in manufacturing varnish, cement, lithographic ink, and sealing-wax ; it is also used for stiffening hats.

The numbers of natives, men and women, employed in the different parts of the factory, with their usual apathy, hardly turned their heads to look at the Sahib visitors. I tried not to irritate the obliging manager who showed us round by idiotic questions or exaggerated expressions of admiration or astonishment to which ignorant outsiders like myself generally give vent on such occasions, but I listened attentively to all he said, and thanked him warmly at the conclusion of our visit. We were now on that side of the river where the beautiful Botanical Gardens, for which Calcutta is justly celebrated, are situated. My hostess had ordered her servants to prepare breakfast for us in one of the pavilions intended to be used for that purpose by holiday-makers, who come in great numbers to enjoy some shade and fresh air, and the great natural beauties of the Gardens.

The servants had come with us on the steamer,

carrying well-filled baskets, and we all did justice to the late breakfast, after which my hostess and I rested under the shade of some fine trees, and afterwards read our papers, while the young people strolled about and amused themselves in the vast domain. Later I visited the huge banyan-tree which sends its branches downwards into the ground and in this way forms a large tent or room. This is one of the wonders of the Gardens. Our servants had tea ready when we got back to the pavilion ; after partaking of it we strolled down to the river banks to await the next steamer, which took us back to Calcutta in the cool of the evening.

CHAPTER XV

THE EDUCATION OF AN INDIAN BANEE—LIFE IN AN INDIAN PALACE

I AM now back again in our dear Haryana, alas ! soon to be ours no more, for the date for the commencement of Bob's furlough is approaching, and on returning to India he will be posted to another district.

On my way back from Calcutta, after leaving Agra and getting off the main line, I stopped at Muttra, a large railway junction close to the old city of that name, a city held sacred by the Hindus as the birthplace of their divinity, Krishna, and, like all sacred cities, full of Brahminy bulls, peacocks, monkeys, and yellow-robed gosavies (holy mendicants).

The sacred bulls, called Brahminy bulls, are gentle creatures, who wander unmolested through the Bazaar and take toll at every stall where they see anything tempting to eat. The most avaricious shopkeeper would not dare to drive

away a sacred bull when he thrusts his muzzle in the grain-bag, or carries off a tassel of Indian-corn. The bulls are used to being petted, and one put his nose into my hand in a most friendly way as I was standing looking at a troop of monkeys running along the roofs and walls like cats. The monkeys are very mischievous, but no one dares to touch them, as they are Temple monkeys.

Tradition has it that years ago a young English subaltern shot one of the Muttra monkeys and paid for it with his life; some of the fanatics who swarm about the precincts of the Temple seized him and beat him and threw him into the Jumna.

Not far off is a temple dedicated to the destroying powers, with the trident of Siva in front, and within, lighted by some lamps, in its farthest recess, a frightful figure of the blood-drinking Goddess Kali, with her lion, her many hands full of weapons, and a chaplet of skulls. A tiger's skin was stretched before her and the pavement was stained with the blood of sacrifices, now only the blood of goats or other animals, but before the British Raj was established in India it was human blood. Even now surreptitiously a human sacrifice, generally a child, is sometimes

offered. Such an act when discovered, being counted as murder, is punished accordingly by the British Government.

Let those who think the religion of the Hindus is good for them (or for anybody) pay a visit to a temple dedicated to Kali.

Before returning to Haryana I changed at Muttra to another line and went off to pay a visit to a lady friend who held the post of guardian to the little wife of the ruling chief, who, being under age, was a ward of the British Government and was away at the Rajah's College. His father, the late chief, had died suddenly of plague soon after the marriage of the heir, who was thirteen years of age, while the bride was seven.

The marriage ceremony performed at such an early age is binding, but after the wedding the couple do not speak to each other, or see anything of each other till they are much older.

The boy was under his tutor's care and went off to the Rajah's College of the Presidency ; the girl was placed under Miss Boyd's care, and they lived together at one of the palaces in her husband's State. The child's parents lived in a distant part of the country and she only visited them occasionally. It had long been felt by

Government officials who have much to do with Native States that it was little use to train the boys and give them modern and progressive ideas if those who were to be their wives did not receive education and training on the same lines to fit them to be companions and helpmates to their husbands, not wives who would drag them back and by their influence undo much of the good that was aimed at by the training given to the boys. The colleges established in India for boys of noble families are institutions where they can live in accordance with the custom of their caste as to food and domestic arrangements, and yet receive a liberal education and training in habits that will fit them for the responsible positions that most of them are to occupy in the future. The principal is always an Englishman, and the tone of the College depends entirely on his influence and aims. Most of the principals are men of high aims and ideals, making the formation of character their chief object.

The work of the late Chester McNaughton in the Bombay Presidency has left lasting results, and his memory is still cherished and revered by his former pupils.

My friend Miss Boyd told me that the husband

of her little charge was charming, just like a nice Eton boy.

When he came home for his holidays it was not etiquette for him to take any notice of his wife, and when he came to visit Miss Boyd the little girl always had to leave the room when his arrival was announced. But though there was no personal intercourse he took an interest in her studies, and expressed a wish that she should have regular instruction in the Vedas, from the bhat or family priest. He objected to her riding.

The young lady was of a very active disposition and had asked to be allowed to ride. Miss Boyd found that the ladies of the family had been accustomed to ride, therefore she routed out the old Pathan who had been the family riding-master, a confidential grey pony was provided by the Riss-aldar, and the riding lessons began. The little lady, who rode astride, thoroughly enjoyed them and became an expert horsewoman, therefore it was a bitter disappointment when "they" came home from college, and expressed a wish that the riding be discontinued.

A wife may not pronounce her husband's name, but always alludes to him as "they."

The plural pronoun is always used as a token of respect, in speaking of elders or people of rank.

The little Ranee was most intelligent and receptive, making excellent progress in her studies and imbibing knowledge without any difficulty. As her husband wished her to learn music it was fortunate that she had a taste for it, and learned to play the piano brilliantly. Her musical memory was remarkable; after playing a piece twice, she could generally play it off by heart.

The old palace in which Miss Boyd and her charge lived was built round a square courtyard, with a tulsi-plant in the centre. Miss Boyd had a set of rooms upstairs to which the little Ranee repaired daily, but the latter had her own apartments downstairs, where she slept, took her meals, and performed her devotions with her own attendants, for Miss Boyd, being of another caste, could not be present at her meals.

The day began early. On rising, the Ranee had to bathe, have her hair dressed, perform her devotions, and take her morning meal before coming upstairs to her *gouvernante*; for Miss Boyd's position was like that designated in old French memoirs by that appellation, *gouver-*

254 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

nante—one who had sole charge in the mother's place, not only of education, but of establishment and budget.

Lessons went on till one o'clock; the curriculum was that usually followed at a European high-school—the three R's, history, geography, and the English language. At one o'clock the Ranee retired to her own apartments for a siesta and a meal. At three she returned to her *gouvernante*, and would be employed in needlework, embroidery, and music, or knitting. She achieved the feat of knitting some silk socks for her husband's wear, which gave great satisfaction.

On certain days of the week a Hindu school-master came to give her lessons in Modi, the written character of the language of the State, which is very elaborate, consisting of much abbreviation and piecing bits of one letter to another, quite different from the printed language.

At five o'clock the carriages came round. The Ranee's was a curious glass coach, the body painted bright green. Into this she got with a girl companion and a pet monkey; her old nurse sat on the opposite seat. The coachman had a blue and red coat and turban, and wore very large gold earrings. Two *puttiwalas* in scarlet

coats stood up on the footboard behind, and as her *gouvernante* was not to accompany her, the house-steward got on the box to take charge. Two Sowars rode behind the carriage.

Miss Boyd and I had our tea, and then started out in a carriage devoted to Miss Boyd's use, a modern victoria. As there was only one road on which carriages could go we soon encountered the Ranee's coach, and passed each other with ceremonious bows. We drove out to the public gardens of the State; there we got out of the carriage and walked about a little up and down box-edge paths between herbaceous borders in which tall hollyhocks were conspicuous among flowers indigenous to India. We fed the gold-fish and listened to a white cockatoo with yellow crest, who is reported to be a fabulous age. He was very loquacious (in the native tongue), calling out all sorts of *apropos* sentences to the servants who talked to him; he was also a very vivacious bird and amused himself by pretending to get into a great rage, rushing up and down the branch of a tree to which he was attached by a long chain, with great flapping of wings and discordant shrieks.

Then we went on to the menagerie. The

poor beasts—tigers, hyenas, wolves, bears—were confined in *very* small cages, where they had barely room to turn round. I felt sorry for them. If they were beasts of prey, still they only acted according to the instincts with which nature had endowed them, without any choice of their own. One poor wolf, who I could see was ill, excited my compassion. He stood motionless at the bars of his tiny prison-cell with a most pathetic, far-away look in his eyes. What had he done to be imprisoned and linger out his days in miserable captivity? It would have been kinder to kill him and his companions in prison outright if they had endangered life, than to keep them as a gazing-stock to amuse idle people.

The look in that dying wolf's eyes has haunted me (I heard he died two days later) and made me question our right to imprison these wild creatures for our amusement.

Sometimes, instead of the evening drive, we repaired to the croquet-ground in the palace garden. The Ranee and a companion of her own age who lived with her were very keen players, and sometimes a few of the State officials' wives and daughters were asked to join. It was a curious scene: the old palace, the compound with a very high wall round it, and

the Indian ladies in their bright-coloured sarees, their bare, unstockinged feet in red leather shoes with peaks turning upwards and inwards, their ankles encircled with heavy silver bangles which jingled as they moved, standing at the hoops they had to negotiate, greatly interested in each stroke, and nervous when it came to their own turn, while the green parrots flew in and out of their nests in the wall, and some monkeys seated on the top looked down with great curiosity and as if tempted to pounce on the rolling balls.

The Ranee retired to her own quarters at eight o'clock, and Miss Boyd and myself had our dinner, after which the house-steward came to give Miss Boyd a report of all that had taken place in the household that day, presented some bills for payment, and took orders for the next day. The cook could not take a day's leave without a written petition being presented to Miss Boyd and signed by her, yes or no. The whole household was conducted in a most orderly manner.

The care of the Ranee's jewellery devolved on the gouvernante; it was State property, and the share allotted for her use was kept in a safe in a passage in the Ranee's quarters. A State policeman, with a musket, did sentinel duty in front

of it day and night (one relieving another at intervals). Whenever the jewellery or any part of it was to be worn, the *gouvernante*, who kept the key, had to remove the cord, with her seal on it, which was wound around the safe, in the presence of the head-steward and the Ranee's personal attendant, to whom the jewellery required would be handed by the *gouvernante*. Then again in the evening when the jewellery had to be put away she had to be present, count out the pieces to see that they tallied with the list of contents kept in a drawer of the safe, then lock up the safe, see the cord put round it, and affix her seal.

Jewellery is worn on festival days. All Indian women have a passion for jewellery, and not to be allowed to wear her jewels on the day of a festival was the greatest punishment that could be inflicted on the little Ranee, if her conduct left anything to be desired. Leaving her out of the question, to the mass of Indian women, most of whom are uneducated, to put on her best saree and *all* her jewellery and sit in state to receive visitors is the acme of happiness.

When Miss Boyd was appointed to her present post she was told to be very careful not to interfere with the Hindu customs and ceremonies

which should be respected by the caste to which her charge belonged. She was most scrupulous on this point, and on some days she did not see the Ranee at all, for the whole day had to be given up to feasting, religious observances, and ceremonies. The Hindu calendar contains a very great number of holidays and festivals, when work is abandoned and feasting the order of the day.

There was one ceremony called the Tuesday ceremony, strictly incumbent on all young married girls, and supposed to promote the welfare of their husbands. The nights of five consecutive Tuesdays at a certain time of year were devoted to it, and the Ranee and all the respectable young married girls of the State put on their best clothes and kept up the celebration all night in the Ranee's apartments. I believe there was a religious ceremony in the morning, but after dusk games and dancing began, and the great point was to keep them up all night, while the musicians drummed and tom-tommed. One game, called "Poogardy," is no slight trial of strength. Two girls stand opposite each other with feet firmly planted on the ground, they take each other's hands and swing each other round very rapidly. The point

is to try who can keep on longest without unclasping her hands. The little Ranee, though short and slight, was very wiry, and generally tired out all the other girls.

Miss Boyd said that although only present for a short time when the games commenced, and afterwards retiring to her own apartments, she never could sleep these nights while the tom-tom's deep notes throbbed through the building ; and the celebrants of the Tuesdays were so worn out when morning came that they had to retire to sleep, and lessons for the Ranee could not be thought of till the next day.

Another ceremony was that of the Pink Paint, when those who were to engage in it took off their good clothes and wrapped themselves up in a cheap white calico saree, and then each, filling a squirt from a basin of bright pink-coloured liquid, proceeded to bespatter each other with it ! I never found out the meaning or origin of this ceremony, but for weeks afterwards the natives one passed on the road wore garments from which they had not troubled to wash off the pink stain. The Pink Paint game always takes place during the Hooli Festival, and is very harmless, but the Hooli is the worst of all Hindu festivals, and there are certain

observances connected with it of which the better class Hindus are themselves ashamed, and in some places have exerted their influence to get the Hooli Festival prohibited. But almost all over India respectable women keep in their houses, and Englishwomen are warned not to go near the native city at the time of the Hooli, for fear of having their ears polluted by bad language; for during this festival men are privileged to bestow vile epithets on every woman they meet.

I was told that by giving vent to this bad language they were supposed to get rid of and cleanse themselves from all bad or impure thoughts that might have accumulated in their minds during the past year.

The people of the State in which Miss Boyd was living were always most considerate of her susceptibilities, and warned her in a very kind manner not to leave her rooms during Hooli week. Naturally, equal care was taken to shield the little Ranee.¹

Many people imagine that the life of Indian ladies must be a very dull one, but that is far

¹ New Year's Day, which comes in March, entails a great interchange of visits. Pan-supari is offered to the invited guest, and certain marks are painted on the forehead with coloured powder, which is equivalent to a kiss and good wishes for the coming year.

from being the case, for the constantly recurring festivals take up a great deal of time, and to recognise these days is considered a religious duty, and it is by this means that Hindu women get some idea of the Hindu religion or tradition and of the chief personages in the Hindu mythology. Little direct instruction is given to them—none among the lower orders.

A Christian child is taught the Creed and Commandments very early, but no such instruction is given to Hindu youth, and when the bhat¹ was told that the chief wished the little Ranee to hear the Vedas, he said: "They are not for her, she is a girl and is young; she already knows all that is suitable for her."

The women of the lower classes are one and all illiterate and know absolutely nothing of their own religion beyond that on certain days they have to bathe in the river and go to the temple with an offering.

If the Hindu ethics are not founded on the Decalogue, there is at least one Commandment—the Fifth—the spirit of which forms an essential

¹ A bhat is not only a priest, he is also a bard, and expected to compose poems in honour of gods and heroes, or at all events to know by heart parts of the national epics that deal with them—the *Bhavagita*, *Ranyana*, etc. The bhat is also hereditary guardian of the pedigrees and history of the family to which he is attached.

part of the education of the youth of Hindustan. They are taught to honour their parents and elders.

It was pretty to see the homage paid by the little Ranee to her great-grandmother. On entering the room where the old lady was seated she would go up and, standing in front of her, make the graceful Hindu salaam, raising the arms, then joining hands, as in prayer, at the mouth and bending to touch her great-grandmother's feet with her forehead, then rising to salaam again. Nor would she think of sitting down in her great-grandmother's presence until permission was given.

Her gouvernante told me that the little Ranee spontaneously showed the same respect to the Political Agent when he paid a visit to the palace; not only did she not seat herself till permission was given, but when he rose to cross the room to the writing-table, she rose too, and remained standing till he was seated.

A mother's influence, too, is paramount, her orders obeyed without question.

In speaking of the education of a young Indian lady, I must not forget to tell you that a knowledge of cuisine is an essential item. To prepare her husband's food is considered the

first duty of a Hindu wife, and though among the upper classes the wife will not prepare the whole meal, yet she will at all events contribute some delicacy concocted by her own hands. To be a good housewife, to manage servants well, and keep down household expenses are qualities greatly valued in a married lady.

A dignified demeanour seems to come instinctively to an Indian girl of rank. The little Ranee was a romp in private life, she did not disdain to turn a somersault occasionally ; when the carriage came to the door she would jump up behind on the puttiwala's footboard and order the coachman to drive round the compound while she stood up behind ; in games and dances she tired out her companions ; in country excursions she would climb hills and sprint along the paths, leaving her escort panting behind. But if an official visitor came, or she was present on any ceremonial occasion, she would comport herself in the most stately, dignified manner, looking fifty years old and with an air as if she felt herself the equal or superior of any king or queen or important personage.

It is often said that the natives of India have no sense of humour, but this is incorrect. To betray amusement publicly is thought indecorous,

but no absurdity escapes notice. The face may be grave and expressionless, but "the foot is working," as was said to me. That is to say, that when paying a visit he would tread on the toe of his companion to communicate his amusement or draw attention to anything that struck him as ludicrous.

Indian boys and girls learn eagerly all English games—cricket, badminton, tennis. Some of our card games are known to them and not taught by the English, such as whist, beggar my neighbour, old maid (called "ghulam," and the knave is the card chosen). At twelve years old the little Ranee played a good hand at whist and always knew where the trumps were. Her old nurse had taught her, and she used to play with her attendants.

My friend enjoyed her life as *gouvernante*. She had a great affection for her charge and a real liking for the Indian people, as she said: "There is no truer gentleman to be found than an Indian gentleman of high birth."

She was always treated with great consideration and respect, and though for many months together she did not see any one of her own race, yet her time was fully occupied with the superintendence of a large establishment as well

as the education of her charge, and she also took an interest in and visited the State schools, for the Dewan was a reformer and had free schools for girls as well as boys. Every hot weather Miss Boyd and the Ranee migrated to the hill station, which was the seat of the Presidency Government in summer, and then Miss Boyd took part in all the gaieties of official circles, and the Ranee was presented to the Governor's wife and taken to visit the principal ladies of the station.

The journey to the hill was something of an undertaking; horses and carriages had to be sent on, and special carriages engaged on the train—one for Miss Boyd, the Ranee and her personal attendant, and the others for the retinue, twenty-one servants, besides the family bhat, and four of the State police (armed), who had charge of the safe containing the jewellery and the money that would be needed to pay all expenses of maintenance during the stay at the hill station, where bungalows had been hired to accommodate the party.

As it would have been an offence against caste to eat in a train, and it would have been impossible to observe the rule of removing all outer clothing for a meal, the journey being long, a

halt had to be made half-way, the carriages shunted to a siding, and permission had to be obtained to light a fire some distance from the station, boil rice, and prepare and partake of refreshments. This took a considerable time, and when it was over, the carriages were attached to the next mail-train that passed and the journey continued.

The delightful climate, the grand scenery, and glorious views at the hill station made the three months passed there a very delightful time.

CHAPTER XVI

CULTURED INDIAN LADY—AN ENLIGHTENED DEWAN—
A BRAHMIN ARTIST—LAST DAYS IN INDIA—RETRO-
SPECT.

DURING my stay with my friend the Ranee's *gouvernante*, I accompanied her to the weekly working party presided over by the Dewan's wife, who was in her quiet way a remarkable woman. The daughter of an Indian Judge, a distinguished philanthropist and reformer, she followed in her father's footsteps and found in her husband a congenial spirit. She and her husband were the only people in the State who spoke English. Indrea Bai—for that was her name—both read and wrote English easily and correctly. She had what is uncommon among the Indian people, decided talent for drawing and painting, especially portraits, and had quite a gift for catching a likeness. She would sit at her easel in her husband's room, while he was reading and attending to his correspondence—for he treated her as a friend and companion and highly valued her opinion.

Indrea Bai's husband and father were some of the first of their caste to treat wives as their equals, and, I believe, created quite a little sensation when for the first time they started out driving in an open carriage, with their respective wives (mother and daughter) in the seat of honour and the Judge with his son-in-law the Dewan on the opposite seat back to the horses.

The Dewan's wife, Indrea Bai, wished to help to raise the women of her race, and as a step in that direction she gathered together the wives of the officials and chief clerks in the State service to work with her in making garments for the destitute children in an orphanage established when the last famine left so many children motherless and fatherless to die by the roadside of starvation, with crows pecking at them and vultures hovering near in expectation of a meal.

"Why should we leave all such work to the missionaries?" said the Dewan. "We ought to be ashamed to do so; we ought to look after our own people."

Sympathy is a quality in which the Hindu character is quite deficient; as a rule Hindus feel that outside family or caste they have no duties. "It is not our affair," they would say. To excite compassion for the outcast and a desire

270 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

to help them in the minds of the ladies of the State was quite an achievement on the part of Indrea Bai. So was the teaching them to sew. Few had ever held a needle in their hand—all clothes-making is done by the dhurzi (tailor)—but they had good-will, and by degrees *some* of them learned to sew and make children's garments quite neatly.¹

The meeting always closed with a little address by Indrea Bai. She would speak of the laws of health and sanitation, or would attempt to widen the interests of her audience and take their minds off the petty cares of daily life by telling them of the wonders of the heavens. Being herself an eager student of astronomy she would at these meetings reproduce in simple language what she had herself learned at her latest lesson with Miss Boyd, who provided books and studied with her.

I am speaking now of the illiterate women composing her audience—women living in a remote Native State, hitherto untouched by modern progressive ideas—and it was amazing to see how astonished they were when asked if they had admired the glorious sunsets lately

¹ The generation now children will know how to sew—needle-work is taught in all girls' schools, Governmental and private.

visible ; it was at the end of the rains, when the evening skies are a feast for the eyes.

“ No ! we never think of looking,” they said, laughing.

Indrea Bai took them to the window, and they admitted that the sight was extremely beautiful. Now the idea had been put into their heads they would perhaps look again.

The Dewan had a telescope, and we spent several evenings on the flat roof of the palace, studying the skies.

Indrea Bai could locate the principal planets, and was eager to add to her list. The Southern Cross, Orion, the Pleiades, etc., seemed her intimate friends. She knew the days and hours when different constellations should be visible, and occasionally came to summon us to locate a newly risen star.

How early she rose in the morning, and induced us to do the same, to gaze at Halley's Comet, how much there was to say about its different positions, how far it had got in its journey across the sky, etc.

The good that such a one as Indrea Bai can accomplish among her fellow women is far beyond what any one of a different race, such as an Englishwoman, could accomplish. Her

husband's official position helped her—in no country outside India has “place” so much influence. The fact that they were high-caste Brahmins, that she wore the Indian dress¹ and was not a Christian, all helped her to influence the women and ladies of the State; she had not to combat or live down prejudice to the same extent as an Englishwoman has to do. But even she had at first *some* prejudices to fight against, for when she first started her working parties, old-fashioned inhabitants of the village stood at their doors and jeered at those who were going up to the palace: “They are going to learn to be dhurzees! Argobai!”

This feeling wore off, and when the Dewan wished to persuade the people of the State to be inoculated as a preventive of plague, which was ravaging the neighbouring State, Indrea Bai went to the dispensary, and was the first to be inoculated, in the presence of a number of ladies she had asked to accompany her, and as she was now trusted by all, the greater number followed her example, and brought their children; and subsequently most of the inhabitants presented themselves for inoculation, with the best results.

¹ Not the topee or hat considered so ugly on an Englishwoman.

Most of those inoculated were immune from plague; the few whom it attacked got it lightly and recovered.

This made a great impression throughout the district where inoculation had not been undertaken, and the deaths amounted to appalling numbers.

It takes a long time for a new idea to be accepted by the natives of India, but they are open to conviction. Ten years ago quarantine regulations and forcible removal to plague hospitals were the cause of riots in many parts; now the people come voluntarily and ask for inoculation.

My friends the Dewan and his wife were not Christians, nor even likely to become so, but they had given up idolatry and belonged to the Prathna Somaj, a sect of reformers whose tenets are in many respects those of the Unitarians. They respected Christianity and read the Bible, but were latterly very much interested in Theosophy.

Their lives were irreproachable, they were seekers after truth, and we are told that those who seek will find.

God speed them.

My friend the Ranee's *gouvernante* did not

find her life dull, being generally fully occupied, and having resources in herself, but she spent a good deal of time alone, owing to a number of Hindu festivals in which she could take no part. While I was staying with her, she lighted on a treasure-trove, which would prevent time hanging heavily on her hands for many a day to come. It happened on this wise. A festival-day came round, and the little Ranee would be occupied all day in her own quarters with her co-religionists, the well-born young ladies of the State, who would come to the palace to assist in the celebrations.

Miss Boyd was free for the day. It would be too hot to go out before evening. English Mail day had come and gone, there were no home letters to write or expect, how should we fill the day? It was to be the last of my visit. I had been remarking that I had not slept well the previous night, on account of the carnival held by the rats in roof and walls.

“I believe their nests are in that old cupboard,” said Miss Boyd, pointing to a door in the wall of the entrance or ante-room. “I have always intended to get it opened and to put down poison or a trap.”

“But will not the Hindus think it a crime to

kill the rats? Are they not averse to taking life at all?" I asked. "Oh!" she replied, "there is an exaggerated idea about concerning the reverence of the Hindus for animal life. It is true that they consider it a crime to kill a cow¹ or bull for eating, and I expect they used to look upon those who do it in the same light as we look upon cannibals, but they treat their draught oxen and horses with great cruelty, and kill sheep, goats, and poultry for offerings in the temples. They drive the oxen by means of a piece of rope passed through the nostrils, on which the whole weight of a heavily loaded cart may hang, and over-driving, over-loading, under-feeding, neglect of sore backs or wounds, are very common offences.

"My cook is often asked for a piece of meat for the Ranee's dog, and as to rats, they are anathema since plague broke out, for it is supposed that they convey it from house to house. Dead rats are the first sign that an outbreak of plague may be expected, and the house in which they die is always vacated if possible, and the roof untiled to let in air and sunshine, the best disinfectants. No one will object to my killing a few rats."

¹ The cow is sacred in the eyes of Hindus.

Calling the scarlet-and-gold-coated puttiwala who was always sitting waiting near the door, within call, Miss Boyd told him to go and inquire for the key of the door.

After some delay he returned, and with some difficulty got the door open. As it turned on its rusty hinge a cloud of dust came into the room, and in the cobweb-hung musty cupboard heaps of rubbish were discerned, some broken china on shelves, worm-eaten harness and saddlery, and some wooden packing-cases, uncovered and full of books that had been thrown in pell-mell; the whole was thickly overlaid with dust.

Miss Boyd told the puttiwala to take out the books one by one and dust them, and as we took them up, and turned over their worm-eaten and discoloured pages, we exclaimed in astonishment to find that they were French books!

To both of us books are what drink is to the drunkard, tobacco to the confirmed smoker, gold to the miser; so we quite forgot the rats and the plans for their assassination in our interest in these old volumes. There were treatises on the art of war, on architecture, and on gardening, which we threw back into the boxes as uninteresting, but there still remained a goodly number of volumes of memoirs, letters, and history of the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries, of which Miss Boyd took possession.

Next day we inquired of the Dewan how such books came there, and he told us that in the days of John Company, before India became a possession of the English Crown, many French soldiers of fortune took service with rajahs in different parts of India, starting their career probably from what were formerly French possessions in India. One such adventurer had been commander-in-chief and all-powerful in this State, and when the Rajah had a fancy to erect a new palace, he (the commander-in-chief) brought over a French architect to build it. This architect brought his wife and sister with him, and they had inhabited the apartments now occupied by Miss Boyd. The books probably belonged to this family.

Miss Boyd said : " Now that I have this store of books I shall welcome holidays, and look anxiously in the Hindu Calendar to see when another is due, so as to be able to enjoy reading without interruption."

I myself have been a student of French history for many years, but Miss Boyd's studies had been chiefly in other directions, so I quite envied her the delight of a first introduction to the

personages who constitute the charm of the old régime, the hours she would pass with Madame de Motteville (chronicler of the reign of Louis XIII. and the youth of Louis XIV.), with Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin, with the Grande Mademoiselle and Lauzan, with Turenne and the Condés, Madame de Montespan and Madame de Maintenon, with Madame de Sévigné and her circle, which includes every celebrity of the reign of the Grand Monarque, with the whole cortège, surrounded by the glamour and glitter which make those days take such a vivid hold of the imagination, with their sharp contrasts of saint and sinner, when the nuns of Port-Royal and the ascetic Carmelites were contemporaries of Madame de Brinvilliers and her confederates the poisoners and sorcerers, the days when everything was possible, and the strangest adventures were everyday facts.

The memoirs of those days are so numerous and full of minute detail, the letters so voluminous and unreserved in self-revelation that we seem to know and understand these people more intimately than the people we meet every day, for between the latter and ourselves is the screen of the body, and in this life "each in our hermit cell we dwell apart."

My visit to this little Indian Queen and her *gouvernante* was a short one, but there has been so much to tell that I think will interest you that I have written quite a budget.

On my last evening, as we sat out under the stars looking at a brilliant Southern Cross and pointers, I asked my friend if she felt her position satisfactory, did she feel that she was doing real good, and that her educational work would have lasting results ?

“No,” she replied, “it is like ploughing on sand. Tradition and family ties have too strong a counter-influence.

“I have a pleasant time here, I have only to express a wish and it is granted, I like the people I come in contact with, and see and hear much that is a novelty to me and consequently interesting ; but my own instincts as a lady would prevent my attempting to undermine parental or family influence, or my telling the Ranee that many of the tenets and customs of her race are, to say the least, undesirable !

“As to morality and formation of character, copy-book maxims are not much use in helping a human soul to fight and overcome evil, the flesh (*i.e.* self), the world, and the devil—religion alone can do that. And as to religion, one cannot

tamper with a child's religion ; her father's must be hers. Only grown-up persons able to weigh and judge for themselves should undertake so stupendous an effort as is involved in a change of religion and all that attends it, especially in India, where it is as an earthquake, reversing hereditary instincts, habits, and tradition.

“Indirectly one may have a good influence. One may point out other standards of conduct and character, and, while showing respect and consideration for the opinions of others, let it be seen that our own are different.

“The Christian ideal always commands respect when lived up to, and it is acknowledged that a devotion to duty is a distinguishing characteristic of the English or Christian character.

“In these ways good influence is indirectly exercised, but when the presence of the person who exercises that influence is withdrawn, the preponderating influence of family ties and habits, traditions and caste, prevent any great change in life or character from being observable, with few exceptions.

“Then there is also the radical and constitutional difference between people of the East and of the West to be remembered. They may like each other, and to a certain point be friends,

but not intimates. A man or woman from the West may associate with Orientals day by day, but can never feel sure of really knowing or understanding them. Suddenly some unsuspected trait of character or opinion will reveal itself, and the Western will feel that he or she is miles apart in point of view from his or her Oriental friend, and that he or she who speaks is a stranger, not the everyday companion they imagined they understood !

“ It is not to be supposed that the West has nothing to learn from the East, and that there are not fine characteristics to be admired in our Oriental friends.”

I had taken ceremonious leave of the little Ranee that evening, and next morning took leave of my friend, her *gouvernante*. I then went to spend two days with another English friend in the district, wife of the Political Agent, and in her house I slept under a most gorgeous quilt, a patchwork of squares of different coloured brocades.

Next morning at breakfast I expressed my admiration for this remarkable bed-cover, and my hostess said : “ I am sure you will never guess its origin. It is the custom of all people of rank who wish to communicate with the

282 A PUNJAUB POMEGRANATE GROVE

Political Agent to put their letter or petition in a little silken bag, and send it by a messenger. My husband had accumulated a great many of these bags, so I asked him to turn them over to me, and you have seen in the quilt the use I have made of them. I put the quilt in the visitors' room because I am sure the sight of it would drive sleep from my husband's eyes, reminding him of office hours, long-winded petitions, and tedious correspondence. As he says: 'It is not the petitions that can be granted which are a worry, but those which it is necessary to refuse.'"

My short visit to this friend was a quiet one; I went just to say farewell, as we shall soon be starting for England. When I arrived at Hariana I had bad news to hear from Bob—the tragic death of our friend and neighbour the lady doctor of the Mission Hospital in the adjoining town] She was an American and had done excellent work in the district. She had recently gone away for rest and change, and was staying at a favourite resort about two miles from a large town at the foot of the hills. It happened that a travelling circus had arrived at this town, and among the troupe were two fighting elephants. These huge creatures are kept tethered,

allowed no exercise, and fed with heating foods till they become very fierce and spoiling for a fight. "Dustoorie" is the word used to denote this dangerous mood. The largest of the circus elephants broke loose. In India every one will fly and hide at the sight of a dustoorie elephant, so he forged along two miles unchecked, entered the court of the hotel, where he knocked down and trampled to death the lady doctor, who happened to be crossing the court at the moment the elephant rushed in. He gored and tossed three men before he was secured.

To those who attribute all events to the Hand of an all-wise and beneficent Providence, such a catastrophe "gives to think." In Madame de Sévigné's off-quoted letter describing the death of the great Marshal Turenne she says: "He was galloping to a distant part of the battle-field, when an aide-de-camp asked him to stop and look at a battery of artillery, and give orders as to its disposition. It was as if this man had said: 'Stop here, sir, this is the spot where you are to be killed.' At that moment came the cannon-ball which struck and killed Turenne alone out of a group of ten people. *I see that cannon loaded from all Eternity, and I see nothing hurtful in this death, as his*

conscience was clear and he was fulfilling a duty."

Thus Madame de Sévigné delivers her opinion.

The cannon-ball destined from all Eternity to accomplish that death exactly at that moment!

Was then that elephant, when born in the Indian jungle, destined to be captured and sold to a circus, to be driven mad, "to make an Indian holiday," to escape and rush into that hotel courtyard exactly at the moment the lady was destined to walk across it? Was he destined from all Eternity to end the useful life of an innocent lady and to compass her death in so cruel a manner?

Truly the ways of Providence are past finding out!

For the past few days we have had daily visits from a young Brahmin doctor who has pitched his camp near us. He is in Government employ, very proud of being an I.M.S. man. He has been sent on a tour through the district on special plague duty. This consists chiefly of holding meetings, gathering the people together and explaining the process and benefit of inoculation, and performing it on those who are willing. This doctor is a very clever fellow, and

was employing his leisure in researches as to mosquitoes, their haunts, and their power of infecting those they sting with malaria or plague, and the best methods of exterminating them. He had some clever drawings taken from their appearance under the microscope. These tiny insect pests, under the microscope, are seen to have poison-bags and a proboscis lengthy enough to penetrate deeply through the human epidermis, and the elaborateness of their mechanism is marvellous in its minuteness.

Are they also destined to live their one single day of life solely for the purpose of doing mischief, of stinging and poisoning ?

One knows of no other purpose attained by their existence. Microscopical research was not Dr. Atmaram's only recreation. He was also a clever caricaturist, and showed us his sketch-book filled with very lifelike "types" of the different sorts of people to be met on board a P. & O. liner.

He had just returned from a visit to England, the fulfilment of a long cherished ambition. Having much artistic talent, to see the great European collections had been the dream of his life. He had studied the subject carefully beforehand, knew exactly which pictures he

wished specially to see and where to locate them. He astonished the custodian of one private collection by asking: "Where is such a portrait which used to be on the second line in this corner?" It proved to have been moved elsewhere.

Dr. Atmaram sat up late with Bob, discoursing on all he had seen and admired in London, delighted to find some one who had also seen and could talk of things which interested him so deeply, but were a dead letter to most of his associates.

"It is hard," he said, "to have to spend my time out here, making ignorant people listen to what they do not want to hear, and in persuading them to do what they do not wish to do!"

There is a good deal of such drudgery, and such-like trials of patience in the life of all Government officials, especially district officials, in India, and it is only after some years have passed that in looking back it is realised that good results have been attained. How splendid and satisfying have been the results of the great irrigation works that have been going on for some years in the Bombay Presidency, giving well-paid work to literally thousands of poor labourers, and bringing comfort and plenty to

hundreds of villages, the inhabitants of which were on the brink of starvation in dry seasons, and always head over ears in debt to the money-lender. Now the irrigation enables them to make sure of their crops, and to free themselves from the tyranny of the sowcar (moneylender). Our friend the engineer showed us the wonderful work he is now engaged on, the largest dam ever yet attempted, far higher than the celebrated dam at Assouan on the Nile. Irrigation, sanitation, medical aid, free education, are some of the many benefits the British Government is quietly and steadfastly bestowing on India, which are appreciated only by the thoughtful among the Indian people.

This is rather a solemn letter, but retrospect is natural now that the day of our departure is approaching. Our packing is finished, the heavy luggage gone on, and in two days' time we shall be starting to rush from one end of India to another in an express train to catch the P. & O. boat at Bombay, and then home!

I have learnt to love India. I revel in the warmth and am in better health than when I came out, for there are very good climates in India. I enjoy the life, the picturesqueness, the

hospitality, the real kindness underneath the gossip and little quarrels of the small stations, all forgotten when illness or trouble comes ; the real heroism under, perhaps, a frivolous exterior. For the last few years English officials have gone with their lives in their hands, and the wives realise it, and if not assassination, there is generally plague or cholera to be faced ; and all this is accepted quietly, in a matter-of-fact way, as part of the daily round. Any appearance of nervousness would be remarked with incredulous astonishment, and he or she would be very plainly advised to "go home."

I am glad, however, that my time has not been spent for the most part in English centres, but in country districts and Native States right among the dear Indian people, my neighbours and very good friends.

It is true that Indian servants possess peculiar powers of exasperation. Even a really saintly woman, a Sister of Charity whom I know, feels this, for when the fact of an English gentleman kicking his servant was deplored in her hearing, she said : "Yes, it was a pity, but I quite understand it."

The servants *are* irritating, but they generally rise to an emergency.

As to the Indian aristocracy, where will you find more courtesy, more generosity, more dignity, more of all the qualities that constitute "a gentleman" than among the noblemen and high-class Indian people?

It will be with deep regret that I shall soon have to depart from dear Haryana, and I am grieved to think that this is the last letter I shall send you from my nook in the Pomegranate Grove.

